

A Charmed Journey

A Charmed Journey
An Inspired Guide to Personal Transformation

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A Charmed Journey

*An Inspired
Guide to Personal
Transformation*

Angela Dawn Lenhardt

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Welcome Note

The lessons I have learned have been powerful and life-changing. I have seen Spirit work through me, my animals, my relationships and my clients in truly phenomenal ways. [Note to Reader: Throughout this book, I will be using the words, “God, Spirit, Source, higher power, the divine and divine intelligence” interchangeably. To me, they all refer to the same thing (and hopefully, this flexibility of language will engender a more inclusive, rather than exclusive appeal).] Miracles happen before our very eyes. As life unfolds, just when we think everything is under control, a “twist” arises in contrast to our plan . . . and life itself seems to await our reaction. If we remain focused and trust in the process, allowing the universe to work through us, we

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discover that our purpose is to be of service—as well as to live a glorious life. It's when we ignore our truth or doubt the magnificence of a higher power, we become detoured from achieving our greatest potential. How do we keep on our path? Keep asking for help, continue listening for guidance, and stay in alignment with who we are.

If you desire something different in life, now is the time to create an opportunity to make it happen. In today's world, most of us are faced with adversities every day, such as fear, a sense of not having enough, and stress. These factors *can* influence us to view the world as unsupportive, lacking and even hostile. This kind of outlook can only be a breeding ground for more fear and scarcity in the world, since like attracts like. At this moment, though, there seems to be a shift happening on our planet, as well as within each of us. This shift is our call to action to “show up” and take responsibility for all aspects of our behavior—to live with integrity, compassion, and respect for all. I believe we are all being held accountable for our thoughts, words and actions, and our lives are a reflection of such. The good news is, we are given plenty of opportunities to change our behavior—to open our hearts and live the life we were meant to live.

If now is the time for you to take a leap of faith, I encourage it. We don't get any of our days back, and

we will never know what we are capable of achieving, if we don't try.

Through my trials and tribulations, I have maintained my faith in God and have seen the natural wonders of the Universe bestow their grace upon me. Developing and listening to my intuition has led me through my darkest moments; but my dedication to being happy and staying on purpose has been my primary inspiration.

I encourage you to keep the lamp of your faith lit, even when it seems there is no light at the end of the tunnel. How YOU live your life is a choice—a choice that only YOU are responsible for. Believe in never-ending possibilities and in the “magic” the universe holds . . . because it's always available.

You only have one life to live—design it, live it intentionally, and make it a good one. Anyone can have a mediocre life, but it takes the extraordinary to have an excellent one.

Namaste.

Introduction

Living a happy, passionate and soul-filled life has been my priority; but the journey has been anything but well-paved or uneventful . . . nonetheless, it *has* been quite charming (hence, this book's title). Yes, my road has been full of both magical and seemingly unfortunate ups and downs (all of which depend on your perception). There is always an element of curiosity within me that seems to keep my life interesting. Learning to stay in the flow of life and accepting "the way it is" has helped me to continue striving to attain greater heights and self-improvement. I have always known that my soul's purpose requires me to be of service to others, especially offering encouragement to those

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pursuing their dreams. However, I had no idea how my journey would need to take form in order to allow me to fulfill my purpose.

There came a time a couple of years ago when I realized the life I was living was exactly what I was *unconsciously* creating. From my living situation to the people in it, all of it was stemming from the thoughts that had been consuming my mind and many of the very words I had spoken. It was as though each thought or word was *becoming* my reality—and there was nothing “fun” or “happy” about it! I knew a higher power was asking me to show more consistent commitment to the life I’d intended for myself; and to own that it would only be through my decision to consciously create and be fully present in all situations that I would be able to inspire others to do the same. This challenging period forced me to grow up and take total responsibility for how I was “showing up” in this world, demonstrating faith and courage during times of hopelessness. The majority of my “learning experiences,” back then, came about while running from one occupation to another, traveling from one continent to the next, trading in one relationship for a better one, and moving from home to home. Granted, this was an expensive and exhausting way to discover my true self; but these were choices I made while exploring life to find out who I am. It was no secret and it took only a short period of time before

the satisfaction of eating out in extravagant restaurants, going on beachfront vacations, or buying new pairs of jeans wore off . . . and I was still left wondering what “it” was that seemed to be missing.

Fortunately for me, the Universe has provided me with plenty of opportunities to master myself, and in return, figure out what “it” is I’ve been seeking. I eventually came to see I had been yearning to understand where happiness really is and how to discover my purpose . . . and in the process, learn how my mind, body and spirit are intricately connected, and are actually *creating my life*.

Over many years of studying energy medicine, I began to understand how our bodies are composed of spiritual, emotional and physical energies, all working together to create our human experience. I became aware of how divinely guided we are; that is, *when* we take the time to open our hearts and listen to the messages that not only Spirit is relating to us, but what our bodies are also saying. It was difficult, but I finally grasped the importance of noticing how we recreate situations and magnetize specific kinds of people in our lives *until* we decide to change and adopt new ways of being. I came to recognize—with a lot of practice—that some habits are truly hard to break; but it has always been more uncomfortable for me *not* to try!

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Looking back, I can find value out of every experience I've had. More often than not, though, maintaining grace during the experience was nearly impossible . . . but these days, I've come to realize it *can* be done!

A Charmed Journey was written for those who are discouraged about their path in life; those in need of motivation to believe there *is* a "higher power" actually guiding you; those finding it hard to trust in that "Universal Force;" those who want to live a life knowing *anything* is possible. This book is for those of you who are open-minded enough, and sufficiently willing, to simply surrender and remain focused on achieving your desires.

When the path appears grim and you feel overwhelmed with challenges, there is beauty in finding the strength to remain positive; there is a sort of grace or elegance when one chooses to surrender, while observing the synchronicity of events taking place that support your highest good. By reading this book and choosing to do your spiritual, emotional and physical "work" on yourself, *and* by using the gifts you have been blessed with, you may discover your sense of purpose in the process, building self-worth and self-confidence along the way. Mind you, these characteristics are not given simply by reading; but are earned through encountering obstacles and transforming them into opportunities for spiritual growth, seeing the lesson while

in the midst of the experience (or afterwards, in reflection), and feeling a sense of accomplishment when it's done, i.e., learned.

There have been numerous times along my journey when I had lost my faith and felt abandoned to figure this life out on my own, seemingly doomed and destined to live my life on the streets. But then, out of the blue, I would hear words of inspiration or read something profound in a book, reinforcing my sense that Spirit is *always* working on my behalf, providing me with valuable insights, along with the support of generous people, so I could maintain the ability to stay in alignment with my purpose.

This book is comprised of three parts: my spiritual, emotional and physical interactions with the universe. These stories, I think you'll find, convey universal, down-to-earth, oftentimes funny and occasionally painful lessons, all of which had their influence in molding me into the person I am today. Granted, there was a point in the process of writing this book, when I questioned which stories I should include; but then, I realized I was inappropriately judging myself, and holding this or that story out of the book would sacrifice its authenticity. Therefore, you'll likely find the most out about me by reading through each story like it's a puzzle piece . . . each one intended to help make the most accurate picture possible of me *and* of the

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“messages” I want to share with you. Without a doubt, there is no replacement for devoting substantial time and energy into pursuing your dreams. However, one element many of us often forget is “giving back” to others . . . and that includes caring for animals and “Mother Earth.” This sort of “selfless service” is how to truly discover your hidden talents, passions and the secret to your personal success.

From my experiences of consciously living a spiritually guided life, I have come to believe that each of us will be challenged to our breaking points, and brought to where our courage will be tested; but it is at these points and these places when and where we can choose to either stay committed to living the life we desire or to live by default. There isn't a right or a wrong way for living life. Like anything else, there are simply choices. However, I've found that the sooner we wake up, pay attention and be okay with who we are, *the happier we'll be.*

And So the Journey Begins...

I was raised on a small farm in Montana, where my brother and I taught ourselves how to make our own “fun,” by climbing hay bales, riding dirt bikes and building forts . . . and I *loved* to run! I had plenty of practice to perfect my running abilities. My mother would pick my brother and me up from school, and often as we were driving home, I would get “mouthy” (as she would say) or repeat something I shouldn’t have. Immediately I’d be told to get out of the car and run home. Although it was somewhat of an odd “punishment,” nevertheless, Mom’s discipline and my daily workouts paid off. I received track and cross-country scholarships, which paid for my college . . . and still to this day, I’m passionate about running.

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Run! Run! Run! I have always been in a hurry, until now; when I've been forced to relax, slow down, and be patient. Not because I have *wanted* to, but because I have learned, the world does not "run" according to *my* time schedule.

I didn't grow up as a bible thumper, but I did grow up Catholic, going to church school on Wednesday's and mass on Sundays. My mother would come in my room, bright and early Sunday mornings, get me out of bed, and help me get ready. I would moan and groan about having to go, sometimes threatening to wear my pajamas; but my mother didn't care. Her response to me was: "God doesn't care what you look like, just as long as you show up." Interestingly, I have taken her words and applied them to my life today. It doesn't matter what I look like, just as long as I "show up." The truth is, some days aren't as productive as others: but I'm passionate about making a difference in this world, being happy, and living my dream.

Much of my character building came from various jobs. I've "done" or "been" all sorts of things, ranging from floral design to investment banking, interior designer, cocktail waitressing, hotel management, bartending in a strip joint –about that last one: I never once took off my clothes or appeared on stage—my mother threatened that if she had ever heard of me dancing, she would drag me off the platform by my

hair. Later still, I went on to receive a certification in massage therapy, at which time, I began more formally integrating my intuitive insights.

These various positions have educated and prepared me for the professions I'm practicing today: as a consultant, speaker, and writer. I do practice what I preach, too. I try to lead a healthy lifestyle: whenever possible, I eat organic, non-processed or non-genetically modified foods; I drink plenty of water; I exercise; I make a conscious effort to be in a state of gratitude as often as possible; I PRAY A LOT . . . and yes, I occasionally eat chocolate, have fun, and laugh at myself often. But that doesn't imply I never fall off the beaten path; but when I do, I acknowledge myself for the way I am "being," allow myself a few days to wallow in my misery, and then I get back on the path I have chosen to travel.

Some would say, I have a "unique" connection with Spirit; or may even label "it" as psychic, clairvoyant, "a little out there," or "just weird enough to keep things interesting." But, I find it difficult to put myself into one category, so I tend to think of myself as "extra-ordinary" and simply living an inspired life.

It isn't like I'm Superwoman or I've climbed the side of a burning building to rescue any small children; but in the midst of my own "quandaries," I'm able to help others make sense of their own dilemmas, while I receive the guidance I need to keep moving forward with an optimistic attitude.

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With that being said, the Universe and I have come to an agreement. If my purpose for being “here” is to be happy, live my dream and inspire others to do the same, especially during stressful moments in life, then I need “real” experiences relating to others, believing a higher power is indeed guiding each of us on our journey and is working for the greater good of all. In other words, I need to know that practicing this “spiritual stuff” helps make “dreams” a reality. Thus far, this is what my charmed journey has been about—discovering that dreams really do come true, and never underestimating the power of the Universe.

It was finals week during my last semester of college and I was living in my sorority house. I had spent countless hours staying up late and studying for my statistics exam (the class in which I had the least amount of interest and the toughest for me to comprehend). Passing this test was crucial for my graduation date. Because the nature of statistics consists of formulas and making calculations, we were allowed to use our book during the final. So, I stayed up late the night before, and prepared my book with all of the necessary notes and information. When I was finished, I placed the book on the coffee table in the middle of the living room floor, and went to bed. That following morning, I was on my way out the door and went to grab my book, but it was missing!

I started to pace the house, looking through desks, drawers, any place someone may have put it. I woke up everyone in the house, asking if anyone had seen it. No one had a clue, and now I was going to be late for class. Frantically, I ran to class and explained to my instructor the case of the disappearing book. (I'm sure this was *not* the first time he had heard a story of a "disappearing book;" regardless, I was telling the truth). Fortunately for me, he believed my story and allowed me to borrow a classmate's book to take my test during a class scheduled for later that afternoon.

I left the classroom and was more determined than ever to find my book. Again, I went back to the sorority house, and one more time, asked if anyone had seen it. "NO! NO! NO!" they all repeated. My next thought was to go to the bookstore. Because students were allowed to sell their books back at the end of each semester for a fraction of the cost, I was hopeful that is where I would find it. So, I walked on over and meandered through the store, stood in front of 400 returned statistics books, scanned the rows, and saw one that looked familiar. I pulled it out from the middle of the stack, opened it up and . . . *it was mine!* My notes were in the front of the cover to prove it! I took my book over to the cashier, and explained what had happened, and wanted to know who was responsible for the re-sale of my book.

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When I had returned to the sorority house with my book in hand, I stood in front of the television set, not minding that I was interrupting *Days of Our Lives*. I looked at the sorority sister who stole it, waiting. She looked at me, and didn't say a word. Suddenly, she jumped off the sofa, walked into her room, packed her bags, and moved out . . . right then and there!

Although it had been a hectic morning, I was still able to make it to the last scheduled hour to take my exam. Thank God for my instructor, who allotted me the extra time to complete the test. When I handed it in, I knew I had passed.

The Universe knew how badly I needed to pass my statistics exam in order to graduate from college. I had worked hard for four years, and I wasn't going to let a "missing book" stand in my way of my graduation date. In my mind, there was no question: the Universe intervened, guided me to my book, and I was able to fulfill that particular chapter in my life.

This was only the beginning of the journey I was unknowingly being prepared to embark on . . . but I had no idea it would lead me to the person who I am today. My conscious quest for happiness began about three years ago, when I lost most of my material possessions (due to financial difficulties), and then decided to sell my remaining items and live the gypsy/homeless life. Up until that point, I had believed that if I worked re-

ally hard to attain material possessions, then I would be happy. So I was working really hard, acquiring more and more stuff, but *not* understanding what the “need” was—that is, why I needed more stuff. Maybe losing all of my stuff was the Universe’s idea of getting my attention, and it worked. I apparently had to be stripped of everything I once knew as my “comfort zone,” and forced to rebuild my life from the ground up. But this time, I had at my disposal what I had learned over the years about how the Universe works on an energetic and emotional level. I was therefore able to use that knowledge to “cultivate” myself all over again *in a more conscious way*. Since everything I had was gone and my business had declined, I had plenty of time on my hands to sit and think about my soul’s purpose and the next chapter in my life. Slowing down wasn’t an option; it was a given. However, taking one day at a time, becoming fully present in the moment and getting okay with “what is” was the key to me recovering my inner peace *and* my accepting that balance was going to be my focus.

This is when I began to ask myself, *What is life all about?*

You see, it seems to me many of us have traveled (or are still) on the infamous “hamster wheel”—going a mile a minute, around and around. *Running to get where, though?* We run to work, we run to the grocery

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store, we run to meet up with a friend, we run home to take the dog for a run! What are we running for? I've come to understand we are all in the pursuit of happiness, aiming to fill the void in our hearts. But I think we're also, consciously or unconsciously, striving to find purpose in life. And discovering a purpose in life, in my eyes, has everything to do with living in a higher consciousness. Once I made a conscious choice to surrender having (what I erroneously believed to be) "complete control" over my life, and once I became more flexible in my thinking and able to appreciate the simple things, I slowly began transforming, like a butterfly, into the person I've always desired to be.

Certainly, happiness is different for each and every one of us. I can only write from my own experiences; but do yourself a favor and figure out what "it" is that you are seeking . . . *and choose to be it!*

Obstacles or Opportunities?

When life becomes challenging, it can become difficult to stay on your life path. One of the books that has been a significant aid to my getting beyond obstacles (and for my personal growth, in general), is Don Miguel Ruiz's *The Four Agreements*. Its central focus, I think, is "how to live your best life." One of the greatest lessons I've had to learn is one of the four major topics of his book: "Never take things personally." In my life, I have constantly gotten my feelings hurt by other people's words. The reality, however, is this: what they say about me isn't about me; and if it is about me, then it isn't any of their business, regardless of their desire to make it their business. As soon as I started using the principles from the *Four Agreements*, my world began to change.

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Granted, at times, it was nearly impossible to always do my best. Doing my best was fairly easy around supportive people and in situations that were going my way; but my *real* growth came from dealing with the adversities that were my “triggers” in life . . . the ones that immediately provoked a negative reaction in me. In those instances, facing both the challenging situation or person *and* my reactive self simultaneously, I had to make a conscious choice to choose a different response, if I truly wanted a different result. Since I was relatively new at learning how to emotionally shift myself, I decided to take the advice of those who had “been there and done that” and who had persevered. My personal interpretation of Ruiz’s “mantra” eventually emerged: *Don’t waste precious time worrying about situations you can’t control*. Expending energy concerning yourself with other people’s perceptions, viewpoints and judgments (especially if these are aimed at you) will only take you further away from nurturing and realizing *your* dreams, and leave you feeling depleted and powerless.

Without a doubt, life *can* be difficult, demanding and seemingly “cold” to you. And sometimes, you *may* be asked to spend your valuable time and energy on doing things you have no (or little) desire to do. Big deal! Do it anyway! Embedded within the endeavor, you may discover a passion you never knew you had—

heck, you may even learn a thing or two! Even though it may not have been part of *your* plan, it may be part of a bigger picture, the Divine's plan for you. And at the end of the day, you can either choose to accept or resist the message the Universe is providing you. But from my personal experiences, the uncomfortable situations seem to have transformed my life the most. The hurdles that prove to be the toughest to overcome can be your greatest teachers in life, *if* you are willing to accept the challenge with an open mind and heart.

Though my years as working as a therapist, seeing clients on a daily basis, listening to their stories, I have found that the relationship between a person and his or her parents has a substantial impact on whether or not that person finds success and fulfillment in life. If the relationship with one's parent is hurtful or unsettling, it appears we seek relationships and environments to reflect those old patterns, so that we can (hopefully) mend those old wounds and get further along with our soul's growth. I believe that is why we are here, to evolve and grow as spiritual beings. So, it may well be that, in order to learn all that you can in this lifetime, you actually "chose" the parents you have. Sure, it's likely your parents don't see the world as you do, and have disappointed you or even hurt you, here or there. Some past event in your relationship with one or both of your parents may have even broken

your heart. Do what you can to take such heartaches in stride; choose to rise up and heal, surrendering your needs about your past and getting on with the get on!

Choosing to remain a victim, or living in a constant state of resentment or fear, will only get you more of what you don't want. Your thinking and beliefs and actions are how you are "known" in the Universe, and the Universe will respond to your requests. What you appreciate will appreciate, and like attracts like. To get something different out of the Universe, you have to raise your vibration and shift your intention (and actions) to a higher consciousness. Make that higher consciousness your focus—by doing so, you'll be aligning your energy with the change you want to happen.

There are many ways to increase your vibration and become more aligned with your higher self. Methods I have used are meditation, prayer, sitting in nature, and eating healthy foods. But the most powerful way I know of is to be of service to others. When life is going well, it is easy to light up a room with a smile, keep your faith and stay on track; but the key is to maintain a high state of vibration as often as possible, even when "life sucks" and you have no clue about how "it" is going to work out. It is during the stressful times that your true self is revealed. If your habits of self-control and self-awareness are sufficiently developed—through consciously practicing such—then a

sacred light will shine through what you do and say. The habits you demonstrate on a daily basis are the building blocks to a happy life, and are instrumental in your achieving any lasting fulfillment.

Being happy and living your life on purpose isn't for the faint of heart. The road may appear desolate, at times; but know you are never alone. Spirit is always there and available to guide you on your path, *if* you choose to listen to the messages that are being sent. Allowing yourself to seek quiet time throughout your day will give you clarity when seeking a direction . . . and will deepen your connection with Spirit.

Breaking the Cycle

Decide to be brave and step into your destiny. Albert Einstein once said, "A person who has never made a mistake never tried anything new." Isn't that the truth! I'm not sure if I can recall in my life that I made all of the "right" choices the first time. But that didn't stop from moving forward. Even though there were times when it was difficult for me to identify what it was that I most wanted to accomplish, I still did the little things each day that would move me in *a* direction, because being stagnant wouldn't get you anywhere! (At least I could then judge whether or not I needed to change direction or adjust something, based on the results I was getting.

You will never know what you are capable of achieving *until you get out of your comfort zone*. There

is an art to picking yourself up, after your ego has been crushed or you've incurred some nasty bumps and bruises along the path you've chosen. Keep in mind that a mistake only happens once—after that, it becomes a choice.

There is definitely a learning curve when it comes to mastering yourself and enjoying the process along the way. Altering my behavior and changing my patterns has often been difficult. As a child growing up, we learn our behaviors and patterns from the people who support and teach us; but if they were “stuck” in their own emotional turmoil, chances are, they will pass those thoughts and actions on to you, consciously or unconsciously.

For example, my mother's way of handling her emotional stress was to drink alcohol and scream a lot. My father dealt with his issues by staying away from home for long stretches at a time. When he *did* come home, my mother would yell at him, and he would just sit and “check out” emotionally. So, in a sense, nothing was ever accomplished *and* neither of them got the results they really wanted. And, since I “took on” some of their patterns, I “did” a similar sort of routine and got similar results (i.e., no lasting fulfillment in my love relations), *until* I decided to do something different.

Many of these challenges were exhausting, but I was determined to get through it with a smile on my

face and gain a better understanding of who I am and what this world is about. Taking down the walls I had up—due to my feeling like I needed to continuously be on the defensive—didn't happen overnight, *and* I'm still a work in progress. I realize, now, that when we can accept ourselves, we can accept others; when we judge others, we are judging ourselves; and when we try to control others, we are afraid of losing something or someone we have never owned in the first place.

According to many of the “spiritual” books I've read, our purpose in this world is to be of service to others, heal old wounds and live by following a Divinely guided path. *How do we do that?* The answers to understanding your path in life aren't “out there,” and my hunch is no one will be able to give you *all* of the right answers, anyhow. Through my studies, I have found that opening our hearts to become one with our Source energy is our ultimate goal. There *will* come a day, I believe, when our journey on this earth has to come to an end, and we will continue on in another form . . . or maybe not. But just in case it's true, it seems to me we'd be wise to deepen our awareness of whatever it is that's responsible for our Being – which I like to call our Source (or Source energy). By doing so, my sense is we'll be led or guided most readily to knowing and Being who we really are.

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One of my clients once told me, “Out of each death of me is born the best of me.” I believe it! My old patterns had to die, so that I could recreate myself. I had to climb into my emotional closets and clean out the clutter. My desire to be truly happy was more important than carrying around the burdens I had been holding onto for years.

I have been on both sides of the spectrum of life, and my pendulum has swung from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. If there is one thing that has gotten me through my life, it is my connection with Spirit, our Source, and keeping my faith. I enjoy living my life on the edge: taking a leap of faith and not knowing what the future holds, *but* trusting that I will always be provided for.

At one point, I didn’t know “how” or “what” to change, until I started being conscious of my relationships. During that time, I started noticing how I was attracting people who were triggering my “old wounds,” and they were causing emotional blow-ups within and with me. These eruptions didn’t have much to do with the present situation, but they had been brewing for years and had finally reached their tipping point. One prime example was how I had held onto the old wounds of judging my father for his lack of ability to manage his money . . . and as a consequence, his “losing” our home. At the same time, my mother was dealing with

her own sickness and emotional stress by confiding in the whiskey bottle. I was 15 years old when my father decided to leave my mother, brother and I and move in with another woman and her two children. It is safe enough to say, we all felt abandoned and hurt.

As the years went on, it became clear to me that these wounds only seemed to deepen with time. Not only did I lose my father, but at the same time, we were living on a farm that had been in our family for nearly 100 years. The financial stress that my father incurred during my parent's marriage was probably the most significant in their divorce. As a result, the farm went bankrupt and everything we had owned disappeared. As our world began to drastically change, we were forced off of our property, and my mother's drinking got to the point where she was no longer capable of taking care of my brother and me.

Given the stark situation, I had no other choice than to pack my brother's and my clothes and find a new place to live . . . in other words, look for a foster home. I'm not sure where I was able to find the courage to leave my mother and the only life I had known; but I knew, deep down inside, that my brother and I couldn't continue living in the chaotic environment we had grown accustomed to. I had no idea where to go, but I didn't care.

A Charmed Journey

We got into my car and started going forward, completely on faith. My brother kept looking at me, asking where we were going . . . and I didn't have an answer. I guess I have always been blessed with an internal GPS, and luckily for us, it guided us to a safe haven.

I remember that, when we finally arrived in a town, I drove to a home owned by someone I assumed would care for us . . . because I knew the "town nurse" lived there. I got out of my car, walked up to her door and asked if my brother and I could spend the night. That "one night" turned into over a year; that is, we stayed there until my mother was able to get the treatment she needed and was healthy enough for my brother and I to move back in with her again.

There is power in recognizing your patterns, but it requires strength and courage to change them. I had to be honest with myself, and ask if the "story" I was repeating in my life was "real" or if it was an "illusion." I came to realize, the longer you keep repeating the same story to yourself, the more convinced you are that it's "real" . . . *and* the more justified you become in your actions. I had to get to the point where I recognized the past is the past, the future is the future, and the only moment I have is the present. It finally occurred to me that I had been unconsciously sabotaging the present, the past *and* the future whenever I was living with self-limiting perceptions and judgmental resentments

An Inspired Guide to Personal Transformation

of others. I needed to change my way of thinking about both myself and others, and “show up” differently, if I expected something different out of life.