

## Strength over Strife



I got my idea for this week's article in, of all places, where I get my hair cut. This is a small neighborhood place with only three salon chairs and two haircutters. My hairdresser, Dina, has been cutting my hair (and the hair of a good portion of the neighborhood people) for a number of years now. This spot has developed into a cozy information exchange depot for the local, marriages, illnesses, and deaths besides a place for discussion and debate.

Dina had just gone to a funeral the day before for the son of a close friend, Carol

But this article is not an article on loss. It is about Carol. A woman who has grown so much during a life filled with strife.

Carol was a quiet, unassuming young woman who got married and thought her life would be just perfect. She and her husband had two sons. The second son was John, born with many challenges, both mental and physical. John was born with serious congenital heart problems and was severely mentally challenged. Overnight, Carol's "perfect" life became a massive struggle. Carol wanted to do everything she could for John to give him the best life possible.

The burden of emotional and financial strain of the situation was too much for her husband; he filed for divorce and suddenly left this family to fend for themselves. Feeling abandoned by the man she thought loved her unconditionally and would stand by her no matter what; and having a child who needed all of her time and attention; Carol truly thought she had reached her breaking point. Being John's primary caretaker she could not hold any sort of a job to bring in money to at least help in supporting her family monetarily. Her heart was being broken two times over. How could she manage to continue? The stress was becoming almost too much for her to bear. John having surgery after surgery; the news that he would probably not have the developed brain capacity beyond that of a 5 year old; getting deeper and deeper in debt Carol faced the prospect of a life that would not change moving forward. How could she go on? What was the point of her life?

In that depth of despair, in that time of the lowest of the low, Carol found her core strength. Out of this core strength she found her personal power. Carol found her power to take control of her life, not having her life control her. She started making phone calls, dozens of phone calls, hundreds of phone calls, all sorts of phone calls. This meek individual turned into a dynamo! (Dina described it as an overnight miracle.) Carol got her ex-husband to start paying

some child support; she researched doctors for John and found a top notch team in Boston. It meant traveling for his surgeries, but she found charitable organizations that provided free lodging for her and others that helped pay some of the cost of surgery each time being in Boston was necessary. She succeeded in getting another local group of doctors close to home to work right alongside the Boston team to provide seamless care. If there was a city agency providing a service she or her sons needed she made sure she got it. Carol's Warrior was unleashed and she never looked back.

Carol's life holds some important lessons for us all. When you think your life has disintegrated right before your eyes; there is nothing to look forward to; anything you do manage minimally to achieve ends up in tatters; what's the use; why bother; everything around you is going down the tubes taking you along with it. STOP. BREATHE. What is the Universe's special lesson for you? It is okay if you can't answer that question, it may not be apparent and at this moment the lesson probably isn't clear anyway. The important thing to remember is there is a lesson, a blessing in disguise, a different road you are supposed to take. LOOK at your surroundings. What is it you have to do to start moving again? What is at the top of that list to enable you to proceed? LISTEN to that whisper of your inner voice. What is it telling you? The first thing may be just to get yourself up out of bed. The first step is the hardest but you can do it. Unleash your dynamo and keep moving forward.

### **Call to Action:**

- ✓ STOP & BREATHE
- ✓ LOOK at what needs to be done
- ✓ LISTEN to your inner voice for guidance
- ✓ Remember to CELEBRATE your accomplishments along the way

You may be asking, "But what of Carol, now? Won't her life feel empty?" Those in the shop that know her personally are not the least bit worried. Her older son has provided her with a grandson! (As Deb would say: "Right on Time!")

**With Gratitude,**

**Kai**