

Tales2Inspire

Sampler book of six
Contest Winning Inspiring Stories



Created by
Lois W. Stern

Expanded and Revised
Original Copyright 2013
Lois W. Stern,

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This *Tales2Inspire* Sampler includes several stories published in the Emerald, Topaz and Sapphire editions of the *Tales2Inspire* books.

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TALES2INSPIRE ~ THE EMERALD COLLECTION

Tales2Inspire

The Emerald Collection



Beyond Coincidence Stories
by Contest Winning Authors

Created by
Lois W. Stern

THE VOICE
by Stan Cupery, M.D

Dr. Don Lloyd finished watching the ten o'clock news and flipped off the T.V. It was 10:30 p.m. He glanced outside and noted it was snowing. His window-mounted thermometer read fifteen degrees, about normal for mid-January in Wisconsin. By 11:00 p.m. he was in bed and snoring lightly when his telephone rang. It was an emergency room nurse at the local hospital informing him that the rescue squad was bringing in a newborn baby girl from a home delivery. The baby was severely hypothermic. Dr. L. cradled the phone with his shoulder while he hurriedly dressed and listened to the rest of the story. On the ride to the E.R. he rehearsed in his mind the routine to treat hypothermia. He was apprehensive, to say the least. He was a family doctor, not a neonatal specialist.

The mother was a massively overweight teenager whose parents hadn't even realized she was pregnant. The girl had gone off by herself, somehow delivered, placed the baby in a brown paper grocery bag in an abandoned house. She left it there on the basement floor to freeze to death. By the time the girl returned home, she was bleeding so heavily her parents had to rush her to the E.R. The resident on duty removed some placental tissue, which quickly stopped the bleeding. He then quizzed the young mother on the whereabouts of the baby. She was evasive at first, but when the resident threatened to call the police, she finally admitted to what she had done. A frantic city-wide search by all available rescue personnel led to the baby's discovery in a relatively short time. The baby, unfortunately, was already moribund when they found her.

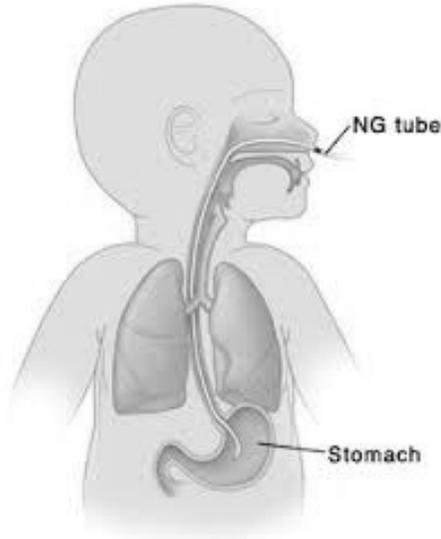
When Dr. Lloyd arrived at the E.R., he was informed that the baby was so cold a rectal temperature could not be obtained. Her pulse rate was only twenty per minute and her weak, gasping respirations were only eight per minute. No blood pressure was obtainable. Her extremities had the consistency of frozen meat.

The Voice

The snowstorm had morphed into a blizzard. A transfer by Med-Flight was out of the question. A neonatal I.C.U. ambulance was dispatched from University Hospital in Madison, but the normal driving time of forty-five minutes was now estimated at closer to two or three hours. The I.C.U. personnel advised the local E.R. to keep up with their re-warming efforts, but added that they had never seen an infant survive with vital signs as dire as this little girl's.

Upon arrival in the E.R., the little girl was immersed in tepid water to which warmer water was gradually added. After one hour of this routine, there was no response. No rise in temperature. All attempts to start an I.V. failed. The needles either bent or broke off in the hard tissue. Nothing was working. By this time, all of the rescue personnel had left. Only Dr. Lloyd and five nurses now remained in the E.R., which had suddenly turned very quiet. In desperation, Dr. Lloyd finally asked if anyone had any suggestions. The five nurses assisting him just shook their heads. Then all of them heard a soft voice say, "Ask God for help."

Dr. Lloyd asked if any of the nurses wished to pray. They didn't, so he prayed. He prayed like he'd never prayed before. Right in the middle of it, he had a brainstorm. Insert a nasogastric tube. Push in and remove warmed saline solution. Warm the body from the inside out. In all his years of training and practice, he had never heard of such a thing, but at least it was something. After forty-five minutes of this routine, the baby's rectal temp was up to eighty-two, the pulse was up to ninety per minute and respirations were thirty per minute!



Nasogastric tube

When the I.C.U. people arrived on the scene, they were expecting a dead baby. To their surprise, they were confronted with a pink, active, squalling little female. After hearing Dr. Lloyd tell him about “The Voice,” the I.C.U. doctor agreed. “There is no way this baby could have survived, other than a God-given miracle.”

After the I.C.U. people had left, Dr. Lloyd sat down with the five nurses and asked them which one had suggested they pray. They all looked at him with wide eyes and swore that no-one had said a word. They also swore that no-one else had been in the room. Then they all were silent and just stared at each other in wonderment.

The baby survived after a very rocky course at U.W. Children’s Hospital. Her only residual was some scarring on her thighs from the deep frostbite. She was initially taken in by a local foster mother and then subsequently adopted by a family in Milwaukee.

Dr. Lloyd was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer twelve years later. His one last desire was to somehow connect with the little girl who would now be twelve years old. Contact was eventually made, but the girl’s parents felt she wasn’t quite ready to share in all the gory details of her birth. Dr. Lloyd, therefore, was just introduced as a nice man who was a friend of the family.

The Voice

They spoke for a brief time, and then, unexpectedly, the little girl asked her father if she could give this nice man a big hug.

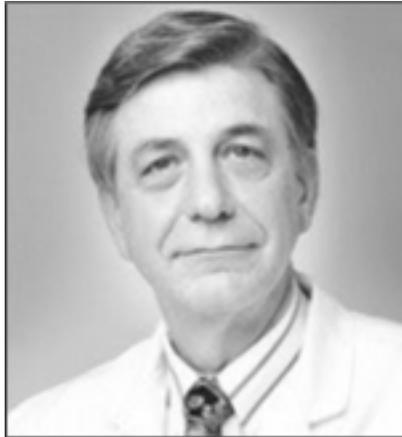
She had no idea what his involvement was with her, but she just felt the urge to embrace him. Dr. L. had to fight back the tears during the hug, but the dam broke on the way back to the car. On the ride home, he confided to his family that this had been one of the most wonderful afternoons of his life.

Dr. Lloyd's health hit a downward spiral, but the uplifting of his spirit helped him organize a cancer-support group, even as he was dying. He repeated his miracle story of "The Voice" to many others who were hopeless or dying.

Dr. Lloyd is gone now, but the cancer-support group continues to grow and lend assistance to scores of hurting individuals. His story of "The Voice" also lives on, as it should, lending solace to those in deepest despair.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Stan Cupery is a retired family physician presently living in Venice, Florida and summering in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin. Dr. Cupery practiced medicine in Beaver Dam and Randolph, Wisconsin for thirty years. He received his B.A. from Oberlin College (Ohio) and his M. D. from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, where he was also an Associate Professor and administered the preceptor program. He interned at St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, Minnesota and served two years in the U.S. Navy.



Stan Cupery M.D.

‘The Voice’ is published in
Tales2Inspire ~ The Emerald Collection,
A collection of Beyond Coincidence stories.

A PROFILE OF COURAGE

by Tina Chippas (a.k.a. Matina Nicholas)

We love heroes. They are people who demonstrate gallant, selfless and audacious behaviors to help others and we're as proud of them as if we knew them personally.

A first-generation Greek-American, I was schooled in the great heroes of Grecian myths and history: Homer, Plato, Socrates, Zeus and his family of amazing, often-mischievous children, to name but a few. I took it for granted that heroes existed, fictional and real. I knew I had heroes in my family: a father who, at age nine and parentless, came to America to work. He demonstrated a work ethic and code of honor for his children to follow; a brother, an Air Force belly gunner, who died in the Pacific. Surely, he was my hero. And a mother who epitomized all that was good and pure in helping others. Yes, I knew people I considered heroic.

But I had never known my heroic grandfather, a Greek-Orthodox priest, until forty years after his death.

Call it kismet: I was in Berchtesgaden, Germany touring the salt mine where Hitler manufactured fighter planes deep underground. Hitler's summer home, "Eagle's Nest," was visible from where I stood. I wandered into a tiny cemetery and stopped short. On each large tombstone was a portrait of a German soldier in uniform. The swastikas leaped out at me. With three brothers in that war, one lost and another wounded, it was still too real and painful. Hitler was a crazed demon to the little girl who saw her mother dressed in mourning black, weeping for the oldest son she would never see again, for the two she might never see again. I stared at the grim faces of Nazi soldiers and officers, chilled to the bone though a hot July sun beat down on me. "Incredible," I said to an American tourist from my bus, "that we can see this so many years later and still be affected by it." He nodded silently. We exchanged names: his was Jacob. He asked the nationality of my last name and I told him it was Greek.

A Profile of Courage

Jacob smiled. "I'm Jewish. If it weren't for a Greek Orthodox priest in Athens who sheltered my parents from German soldiers, I wouldn't be here!" I had the strangest feeling that I knew the answer to my question when I asked if he knew the priest's name. "Father Nicholas," he replied.

It was my grandfather! Destiny had placed Jacob in my life for a reason. I decided to learn more about my grandfather and flew to Athens.



Tina's grandfather, Father Nicholas

I found and entered the cool darkness of the tiny church in the Plaka, under the Acropolis, dating back to the eleventh century. Candles flickered and cast mysterious shadows. The scent of burning wax mingled with incense. Icons, hundreds of years old, surrounded me. I was overwhelmed with a sense of coming home. I knelt on the stone floor, the same stones where my grandparents

stood when they married, baptized their children, where their coffins rested.

I felt a hand on my shoulder. *My daughter, can I help you?* An old priest, Father Orestes, peered at me over his wire spectacles, his face creased in concern. *I am Father Nicholas's granddaughter,* I answered, simply. He told me he had been the deacon who served under my grandfather and invited me to join him in the tiny garden behind the church.



Little church in the Plaka - within sight of the Acropolis

We sat in the shade of a vine-covered arbor with the scent of mint wafting toward us from the garden. Father Orestes spoke slowly, remembering the painful past.

The Greeks were not equipped to fight such a war and were far outnumbered by the Italians and Germans. In October of '40, when Italy invaded Greece, Greek troops repelled them after a bitter struggle.

That was the first Allied victory in the war, he continued. *Then Hitler launched the Battle of Greece and the Greeks were outweighed*

A Profile of Courage

by Germany, Bulgaria, and Italy. But when the Germans tried to seize Crete with paratrooper drops, the Cretans and Allies fought fiercely and their fight delayed the German's military plans against Russia.

Father Orestes continued. *Then God sent His servants to show us the way. After the Germans entered Athens, they ordered an Evzone, one of the elite soldiers who guard the flag that flies over the Acropolis, to remove it. The young soldier obeyed the order, then wrapped himself in our blue and white flag and leaped from the wall of the ancient fortress to his death. It was the first day of German occupation and the first act of resistance in the city.*

The old priest wiped his eyes.

It was a terrible time for Greece, for mankind. But there were heroic people, like your grandfather, who showed us the way out of the hell Hitler had created. There are people who are so pure of heart, they are chosen by God to lead our souls.

No one knew, at first, that Father Nicholas was involved in hiding the fleeing Jews. He safe-harbored Jews from Salonika until they could be transported and the ancient church had many hiding places. In 1941, Hitler had authorized Himmler to exterminate Jews in Greece. The Germans herded 48,000 Jews out of Salonika and shipped them to Auschwitz. Many died en route to Auschwitz. The others were killed. The Germans warned that anyone aiding Jews to escape would be executed but that did not deter the Greeks. The Church of Greece, under Archbishop of Athens Damaskinos Papandreou's leadership, condemned Hitler's plans for the country and instructed priests to announce its position in their sermons.



Honored priest

When the Germans rounded up Jews, over 600 Greek Orthodox priests were arrested and deported because of their actions in helping Jews. Under threat of death the Archbishop and Athens Police Chief Evert saved the lives of thousands of Jews.

*The day came when German soldiers marched to the church.. Father Nicholas and his assistants were removed from the church. In the courtyard, they faced their executioners without fear, machine-gunned in front of their parishioners. They were people who sacrificed themselves for the love for their human brothers, without regard to religion. Father Orestes raised his hand and said, *May God rest their souls*. He saw me to the gate and bid me goodbye. I kissed the old priest's hand, a sign of respect for the church.*

Before I left Greece, I visited my grandfather's grave under silver olive trees. I thought about this heroic man whom I had never met, about all those Greeks who had placed their families and their own lives in peril, who had perished, saving people of another faith.

A Profile of Courage

They made . . . *deliver us from evil*, a reality. Surely, our ancient fathers must have been satisfied that their children fulfilled the glory that was Greece.

...

I've observed that when a crisis occurs, people respond in three basic ways: some who decide non-involvement is safest; some who become part of the problem and those who ask, "What can I do to help? How can I make this better?" The last one is what heroes do. They perform heroic acts in times of crisis. They are ordinary people performing extraordinary deeds.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tina Chippas is a founder of the North Palm Beach Writers' Consortium to support advanced writers to seek publication. She has been published in educational texts and professional periodicals and journals. Tina currently resides in South Florida, where she is working on her next novel and writing a column for a southern Florida newspaper, Condo News. Tina's book, 'Affair in Athens', is published by Oaklight Publishing under the name "Matina Nicholas".



TINA CHIPPAS

This story is published in
Tales2Inspire ~ The Emerald Collection,
a collection of Beyond Coincidence stories.

ABOUT TALES2INSPIRE ~ THE EMERALD COLLECTION

The **Emerald**, the symbol for intuitive awareness, is the root of past, present and future connections. Is there really such a thing as coincidence? A girl learns that her childhood heroine is actually her biological sister. They meet and discover that their handwriting, talents and interests are exactly the same. A runaway dog sits in a garden miles from home, too frightened to move. Its frantic owner stops a total stranger, who turns out to be the one person who can lead her to her dog. These and more *Beyond Coincidence* award-winning stories will make you wonder if we are really as free as we think we are. Are there unknown forces guiding our lives?

REVIEWS FOR THE EMERALD COLLECTION

This is a book with a heart. Filled with stories which reveal what happens when we choose to live in a way that is life enhancing for all God's creatures. Our potential is miraculous when we choose to inspire the vapor of love. The people in these stories have always been my teachers. Read and learn the lessons of life.

Dr. Bernie Siegel

Noted physician, healer, author and humanist

(A Book of Miracles, The Art of Healing, and 365 Prescriptions for the Soul)

Do you believe there's a reason for everything? That people come into our lives, and leave, for a reason? Well, if so, this book is an inspiration for you all! Come inside . . . (to read these) stories filled with messages of hope and inspiration. You will marvel at their power. These tales do inspire. They bring you to your knees and then, they lift you up again. Congratulations to Lois W. Stern for bringing this collection of stories together.

Dr. Karen Hutchins, clinical psychologist and author

14 published books including:

As I Am, Just a Common Lady, Nothing Left to bBurn, Making Love on Scrabble)

The Emerald Collection of inspiring stories brings us remarkable messages of faith, courage and peace. . . . Unlike many books that you read just once and put aside, if you are like me, you will want to return to these stories again and again. I felt uplifted by their energy, examples of courage, selfless behaviors, devotion and everyday miracles, and the powerful messages that they held. The Emerald Collections is the perfect subtitle for the beautifully crafted gems that are yours to read over and over again. I highly recommend this book for anyone who might ever ask the question: Why not?"

Lisa Karl

An Amazon reader

I was blown away about the Little White Church story that you must read first. I now know what a miracle really is. These stories are very short but to the point, and you will truly enjoy each and every one of them. The stories will bring tears to your eyes.

Michael Mlonji

An Amazon Vine Voice Reviewer

Author of *The Horse Whisperer*

The book lives up to its title and much more. The stories will lift your heart and brighten your day! They are so engaging. I wanted to read all of them in one sitting. I look forward to others in the series.

James Osborne

Author <http://JamesOsborneNovels.com>

*. . . If you believe as I do that there exists an energy that is beyond our five senses, then Tales2Inspire is a MUST read for you. Each story will lead you to consider that we are a collective part of something much larger than our individual selves and that divine interventions are available to us at any moment in time. Beginning with the internal voice heard by Dr. Dan Lloyd that moved him to perform his "one-of-a-kind" life saving surgery in *The Voice* and concluding with the amazing story of Pat Surface in *The Gift of Family*, Lois W. Stern has achieved her objective in bringing to the*

reader stories that touch the mind, heart, and soul. The Emerald Collections is the perfect subtitle for the beautifully crafted gems that are yours to read over and over again. I highly recommend this book for anyone who might ever ask the question: "Why not?"

Glenn Poveromao

Motivational teacher/author

(The Power of Visualization, Change Your Thinking Change Your Life, The Spirit's Self-Help Book)

. . . Did you ever experience something that you felt couldn't have happened simply by coincidence - that perhaps an unknown force entered your life to take charge? These are the true 'Beyond Coincidence' inspiring stories written by everyday people just like you. Here you will read Heidi DuPree's story of the lost dog who landed in her Garden of Miracles at the very same moment her husband had met up with its distraught owner, frantically searching for her beloved Aussie, many miles from home. Here you will read Tina Chippas' remarkable story of how, through meeting a stranger in a German cemetery, she uncovered the history of her heroic grandfather, who saved the lives of thousands of people while sacrificing his own. This collection of inspiring stories will warm your heart, uplift your spirits, and sometimes leave you gasping the single word, "unbelievable."

Steve Brock

(Stevo's Book Reviews on the internet <http://tiny.cc/fpqbdx>)

As a psychologist, I appreciate that we learn from stories and this book does that in such a gripping way. I often ask my patients to read to normalize their experiences and broaden their views of empathy and compassion to become "emotionally literate." This book is filled with tales that do that...particularly touched by Cami Ann Hofstadter's Maintenance for My Soul...gripping and touching; we fall in love with the words and the meaning.

Dr. Wendy Satin

Psychologist

*PERSONAL AWAKENINGS STORIES FROM
TALES2INSPIRE ~ THE TOPAZ COLLECTION*

Tales2Inspire

The Topaz Collection



*Personal Awakenings Stories
by Contest Winning Authors*

Created by Lois W. Stern

AND THE MUSIC PLAYS ON
by Charles Musgrave, Ph.D.

Dan Johns is the ultimate all-round musician in our band - a tremendous leader with lots of enthusiasm. He started playing as a grade school child and joined a dance band in junior high school. Dan was an exceptional musician. He was chosen to play in every all-state high school band in Nebraska. Recognizing his talent as well as his thorough enjoyment of music, Dan's band director suggested that he continue his musical studies in college. However, the United States Armed Services called him first to play in several army bands. When he was discharged, Dan did enter a college music education program and signed up for the Nebraska Cornhusker marching band. The university band director, Dr. Don Lentz, selected Dan to be head Drum Major because he already had plenty of trumpets and needed someone tall to direct the band on the football field.



Drum major, Dan, with the Nebraska Cornhusker's Band

Academically, Dan found that he also had a talent for woodworking and carpentry. He graduated with a degree from the

And the Music Plays On

Vocational Department so he could teach Wood Shop to high school students.

Soon afterwards, Dan obtained a teaching position in Colorado Springs, Colorado at their new high school, where he spent the rest of his teaching career.

But that's not the end of this story, only the beginning! You see, his trumpet was his best friend (after his new wife, Jean) and he continued playing it in local dance bands every chance he got. He landed a job as lead trumpet in the Tavern Band at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs and played there for fifteen years.

During that time, as many musicians did, he was a smoker without thinking too much about it. It was just a way to pass the time during breaks in the "gig."

Jean and Dan retired to Arizona in 2001 because breathing in the high country of Colorado was becoming a problem after he had been diagnosed with C.O.P.D.



Dan with his wife, Jean

Stories from Tales2Inspire ~ The Topaz Collection

The dry desert air was what made life a lot more tolerable for him and his playing. He immediately volunteered with several of the bands in Sun City, Arizona. He found that several dance bands and concert bands were looking for talented retirees. He sat first chair in every band, and life was good. But during the next ten years, breathing continued to become more and more difficult.

In 2009, the doctors suggested that oxygen would alleviate some of the stress caused by the C.O.P.D. As most patients of this disease know, it is a “downhill run” as the body continues to lose lung capacity. He tried to hide it from his friends for quite some time, until I challenged him to forget his vanity, and improve his performance.

In the spring of 2011, Dan’s medical condition worsened and he became weaker, needing more oxygen than his failing lungs could provide. Dan entered the local Del Webb hospital for tests to evaluate his lung function, which was found to be at only fifteen percent.

As his breathing became more stressful, he had to take more rest periods assisted by larger and larger doses of morphine.

The members of the Desert Brass band wanted to give Dan a surprise concert at the hospital. I approached the hospital administrator with the idea. He gave us his full support and even allowed us to gather beneath his window for this event. Dan was beside himself with emotion. He couldn’t believe his own eyes and ears. To think that his colleagues would give of their time and talent to support him. It was so inspiring to watch his face.

Finally, Dan’s doctors determined that his body was in need of more care than the hospital could provide and called for Hospice supportive services to step in. Their mission was to maintain him while keeping his pain and stress levels to a minimum.

He was finally sent home under the loving care of Hospice. His breathing specialist recommended that he continue blowing his trumpet as much as possible to keep lung function at this lowered maximum. It helped for a short time, until home care became too

difficult for his wife, Jean. Hospice placed him in a Hospice facility when they felt that he had very little time left.

On a Saturday evening in September 2011, we learned that Dan had fallen into a coma that morning and was not responding to any stimuli. The doctors advised us to start planning his memorial service as his body functions were shutting down. Rev. Ed White, Jean, my wife Toby and I were called to be with him at the Hospice Center in Sun City. I suggested that Jean bring his trumpet from home as I thought it might comfort him during his last hours. When she returned, I placed the instrument in his left hand and brought his right hand on top of the valve buttons. Then, the strangest, most eerie event happened!

After being comatose for hours, Dan's right hand fingers started pushing the trumpet valves up and down . . . He continued pushing them up and down for several minutes, then buzzing his lips . . . the way a trumpet player makes the instrument play pitches. Amazingly, he then tried to raise the horn up to his mouth. He was actually regaining consciousness! He opened his eyes and tried to make a sound on the horn. Nothing yet . . . but still, in our minds we were experiencing a modern day "miracle".

His comeback to life continued remarkably. I told the nurse witnessing the event how well he had been able to play during his life and that hopefully by the next evening he would be able to demonstrate this to her. Early Sunday morning Dan actually called Jean and asked her to stop by McDonalds and bring him a hamburger and chocolate shake.

Toby and I came back Sunday afternoon to check on him. He was sitting up in bed and when we arrived and welcomed us.

When I asked Dan if he was ready to try playing his horn that afternoon, he asked me to take the trumpet out of the case and give it to him. I called the nurse and told her that he would play her a tune. He actually played a few measures of "Sugar Blues", a tune he had played many times for the band's encores. What a quick, unbelievable recovery!

Stories from Tales2Inspire ~ The Topaz Collection

Dan was discharged from the Hospice Care Center on the following Friday to go home with his wife, but still under their home care services.

His lungs have not changed and lots of oxygen is still a must. But he was dismissed from Hospice care about two months later, under the loving care of his wife, because their services were no longer needed.



Dan, with oxygen assistance, playing his horn

Although life has continued to be a struggle for Dan, he still plays his trumpet and attends rehearsals whenever he feels up to it.

The future might not be very bright for Dan, but he continues to enjoy this trumpet “handle” in his daily struggle to make music. For the rest of us, every rehearsal with Dan in our midst is a gift just to hear him continue to play. Only God knows when Dan will finally be called home to play in “His” heavenly band.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Charles Musgrave and I am presently conductor and musical director of the Desert Brass Band of Sun City, Arizona. Prior to retirement I was a college and university administrator, but during my early career years I was employed in several school systems as an Instrumental Music teacher. Over the past few years of retirement I have had the privilege of working with many former professional musicians and music teachers in a band that performs in the northwest valley of Phoenix, Arizona. I have known and utilized the skills and enthusiasm of many talented musicians, but one of the special 'guys' is my first chair trumpet player, Dan Johns, whom I have worked with for the past ten years. If I had to select a top musician in our band, Dan would head the list.



Charles Musgrave, Ph.D.

This story is published in
Tales2Inspire ~ The Topaz Collection,
a collection of Personal Awakenings stories.

GOD MADE A MISTAKE

by Jessica Marie

My name is Jessica Marie, but my birth name was Maria Luvia. Every year my family gathers together on “Gotcha Day” to celebrate the day my parents brought me home from Guatemala after adopting me as their baby daughter. I was exactly six months old on that very special day in my life.



On my way to JFK Airport

Each year we watch the video of my parents carrying me off the plane at JFK Airport. I’m clutching a baby rattle as I meet my new family of grandparents, aunts and uncles for the first time. They have big smiles on their faces but their cheeks are streaked with tears.

God Made a Mistake

My new Grandma, Grandpa, Grandma-ma and Papa are wearing T-shirts printed with my picture and the words: *Jessica, we love you.* They are holding bunches of pink, purple and white balloons, a cuddly toy puppy dog and a multi-colored donkey-shaped piñata.



Everything ready for my arrival at JFK airport

Seven months after that first “Gotcha Day”, my mother gave birth to one of my brothers, and the following year, a second brother. Lots of cousins were born in those next few years too.

I was very aware of all those growing bellies and kept asking: “But whose tummy did I grow in?” Although I was always made to feel like I was the special angel in the family, I couldn’t help but notice that I was the only one in our family without blonde hair and blue eyes.

Last year, at the end of “Gotcha Day”, my aunt invited me to go with her family to Nicaragua to help build a home for a family that needed one. Without even hesitating, I said "NO"! Everybody was surprised by my response, including me because I am normally a nice, caring person who loves to help others. Why wouldn't I want to help a family in need? I was so confused.

Here I was, the same person who, from the time I was a toddler, always was looking for ways to comfort my brothers. When one of them cried, I’m told I’d be the first to run to the rescue - even once snatching a Binky right out of the mouth of a baby none of us had ever set eyes on before, to plop it into my brother’s mouth.

Here I was, the same person who at age five was so deeply effected by the World Trade Center tragedy that I emptied my piggy bank and asked my dad if he could give the hurting families my money. And once he assured me that he would do that, I’m told I said: “Oh, Daddy, my heart feels so much better now.”

Maybe empathy is something I learned by example, from being raised in such a loving family, but I sometimes wonder if my loving nature comes from my birth mother as well.

And if she was so loving, why did she give me up? And why was I saying ‘NO’ to going to Nicaragua now? The questions kept coming.

My parents helped me talk through some of my feelings and suggested that I start writing down my thoughts. I didn't think it would help, but I started writing anyway and discovered that they were right. As I wrote, feelings about my birth mother came up. I suddenly had so many questions . . . *Why didn't she want me? Was she sad when she gave me away? Did she ever love me? Does she think about me on my birthday? Do I have any brothers or sisters in Guatemala?* The questions kept coming. Eventually I was able to

God Made a Mistake

understand that the reason I didn't want to go to Nicaragua was because, in my mind, Nicaragua was very similar to the place where I had been born. By going there, I would have to deal with the feelings that my biological mother gave me away. I was also afraid to see, with my own eyes, how awful my life could have been living in poverty.

Well, I finally decided to go to Nicaragua and I was relieved by what I saw. The people were happy and loving to each other. The children were having fun just playing in the river and digging in the dirt. I saw that they didn't need possessions to be happy, they just needed to be loved. Maybe I could have been happy living in Guatemala after all.



One 'before' picture of the house in Nicaragua

After a week of hard work, the house was built. It was only one room with four walls, but the family was so excited you would have thought they had won the lottery. It made me feel really good inside.

Stories from Tales2Inspire ~ The Topaz Collection

Going to Nicaragua opened my eyes and helped me see things in a new light. I began to realize that I probably would have had a happy life in Guatemala. I wouldn't have known about beautiful clothes and Smart Phones, so I wouldn't have felt sad that I didn't have those things. But knowing all this makes me feel so grateful for the life that I do have. And even though I will probably never get the answers to the questions about my adoption, I know in my heart that God had a plan from the start, to place me with this very special family that I was meant to be with. As my mom said, *Maybe God made a mistake first time around, and needed to fix it by bringing you to us.*



An outside view of the rebuilt house in Nicaragua

God Made a Mistake



Children with new bunk beds

Addendum: I am an eighteen years old young woman who prefers to remain anonymous, but simply wanted to tell my story to help other adopted kids work through their adoption issues. My main message is this: “It’s natural to wonder about your birth mother and the reason why she gave you up. But please don’t hold on to bad feelings or judge her harshly, as you might never know what circumstances caused her to make that decision. And if you have been as fortunate as I, to have been adopted by a wonderful family, count your blessings.

‘God Made a Mistake’ is one of the ‘Personal Awakenings’ stories published in *Tales2Inspire ~ The TopazCollection*.

ABOUT TALES2INSPIRE ~ THE TOPAZ COLLECTION

The Topaz, the symbol for self-realization and confidence, brings us a collection of Awakenings stories. A mama cow unexpectedly dies seconds before giving birth to her newborn calf. A city gal fearfully helps bring this calf into the world. She raises him to a 2000 pound bull with the pride of a mother toward her growing child. A skilled psychologist teaches a quadriplegic little boy how to use mental imagery to 'touch and feel' things that are physically impossible for him to do. With his newly acquired skills, he grows up to lead a fuller life, becoming a role model for others. These and more award-winning stories share unexpected Awakenings moments to inspire us all.

REVIEWS FOR THE TOPAZ COLLECTION

Though my goal (in reading this) book was entertainment, many of the stories teach powerful lessons that can only be taught through the prospective of someone living a very different life than mine. There were lines that stopped me in my tracks. For instance, a high achieving diabetic preteen admonishing his over-protective mother with, Mom, do you own this disease or do I? Another was an adopted girls realization about true happiness.

Many stories seek to teach us about the power of the mind, but this story of the incredible bond between a Dr. and her 7- year quadriplegic patient may be the best illustration I've read. The first exchange between Dr. and patient was the child saying he had a "really bad tummy ache." The Dr. took that as a "clue to the healing of the soul" because (she knew) he could feel nothing below his neck. . . . an amazing story begins and brings an enjoyable and enlightening book to an end.

John Graden

*(author of Near Death Experiences-Doctors,
Scientists Go On The Record About Heaven and the Afterlife)*

The reader will meet some quite amazing people with incredible values and inner strengths. The thing to remember of course is that they are "ordinary people" who show exceptional resilience in the face of life's challenges. There is an unforgettable wheelchair journey, where the reader may wonder at the resolve of the human spirit.

About Tales2Inspire ~ The Topaz Collection

There are many human emotions too, dealing with loss, adoption and family bonds. The book is a series of personal journey stories written by winning authors to a Tales2Inspire contest. There are some animal stories too but the child in the story "As I Am" will move the reader most. The overwhelming theme is of ultimate "triumph over adversity". This is part of an ongoing and interesting series. I look forward to the new releases.

Anthony Wright

(Speaker, trainer and author: *You Can Self Heal*)

. . . one of the books in a series of inspirational books in the Tales2Inspire series, The Topaz Collection presents stories that teach, charm and warm the heart. Each story is unique yet shares a bond of uplifting and gratifying life experiences told through the words of writers like Susan C. Haley, who brings a large baby calf into the world when its mother runs into life-threatening problems trying to deliver it. The bond between Haley and the surviving calf prevails as he grows to become a 2000 pound white bull.

Author Lois W. Stern relates how she overcame her fear of public speaking when she was a shy first grade student, by standing in front of her classmates and amusing them with an account of how she found an opossum in her garage. Their response, so excited and intrigued, gave Lois a life lesson that would bring her success later in her endeavors.

Writer Karen Pirnot, PHD, in her story, shows how she helps a quadriplegic young boy to learn to use his mental imagery to 'touch and feel' things that he can't in reality. Garret grows up to lead a fuller life due to this practice and becomes a role model for others in his situation. These are just three of thirteen exceptional works.

Those enjoying these fascinating and sometimes humorous tales will want to move on to read other accounts of the strength and faith of ordinary and extraordinary people, in (each of the Tales2Inspire Collections - stories to be read and treasured.

Micki Peluso

(Journalist and Author of: *And the Whippoorwill Sang*)

*Who doesn't like REAL LIFE GOOD NEWS! Great Effort and Generous Gift! You'll Laugh, Cry and Applaud. Pay it Forward!
Share your inspiration.*

Cecile M.Bell

Author

About Tales2Inspire ~ The Topaz Collection

I find it inconceivable that any title other than Tales2Inspire could possibly be assigned to Lois Stern's Topaz Collection. Lois' compilation of inspiring stories is a powerful and touching tribute to the inherent qualities of compassion and strength of the human spirit. Each story touches the reader's emotions and offers inspiration in a different, yet similar way.

From the journey of Gabriel Cordell in Roll of a Lifetime, to the adventurous spirit of Luke Potter and his family in New Life in the Country, to the deep compassion and understanding of Dr. Pirnot in As I Am, the human spirit is highlighted and will move your soul in a very deep and powerful way. In a world that is seemingly dominated by the prominence of the media's negative "News," Tales2Inspire is a refreshing tribute to the kind and compassionate deeds that exist everywhere in our global society. I highly recommend the Topaz Collection to anyone seeking to witness the human spirit at its best.

Glenn Poveromo, Author, Inspirational Speaker

(The Power of Visualization, Change Your Thinking Change Your Life, The Spirit's Self-Help Book)

The author has done a great job of bringing inspirational stories that will make you say WOW! I could not stop reading until I had finished every story of courage, and inspiration. You need to read all four books in the series.

Michael Monji

An Amazon Vine Voice Reviewer Author: *Tree Whisperer*

The Topaz is the birthstone gem that symbolizes energy and truth seeking. All thirteen inspirational tales in The Topaz Collection add a distinctive and clarifying facet to this gem of a book. Charles Musgrave's 'And the Music Plays On', teaches a lesson to even the most cynical of us that 'modern day miracles' indeed occur. This story gives a message of hope, despite many obstacles, and demonstrates the power of our inner strength and determination

Maria Couchara- Jordan, MSN, RN

Nurse Instructor , Author of Kylie's Blossoms

TIMELESS MEMORY STORIES

FROM TALES2INSPIRE ~ THE SAPPHIRE COLLECTION

Tales2Inspire

The Sapphire Collection



Timeless Memories
by Contest Winning Authors

Created by Lois W. Stern

MY SPECIAL BOY, OBI

by Ashley Howland

Our yellow Labrador, Obi was beyond cute. He had a line of fur that stood up between his sparkling eyes. We used to call it his zipper. His face was permanently contorted into a dopey grin, but his eyes, they were what gave it all away. Those eyes showed that he knew things. We used to laugh that he'd been on Earth before. Obi was a highly independent puppy who had an air of confidence about him. He seemed to say that everything was okay with the world because it contained him. He showed no arrogance though, just pure, unadulterated confidence.



Obi, the super pup

My Special Boy, Obi

Just after we brought Obi into our lives, I became a primary school science teacher. My job was quite challenging. I had to work with every class twice a week. I had thirty different students, all with individual and emotional needs, for each lesson. I decided early on that I needed some help. Naturally I turned to Obi.

I asked permission to use him as my behavior management and motivational tool, but before I was allowed to do this, Obi had to pass a test. He had to attend a staff meeting and meet all the teachers. They had to collectively agree that Obi could come to school. Most of the teachers thought the idea was great but one of my colleagues who had previously had a bad experience with a dog, was petrified. During the meeting Obi sat right next to this teacher. He lay quietly and gradually moved closer and closer to her hand. By the end of the meeting she was actually stroking his head. Later she confessed that Obi was the only dog she had not been afraid of and she couldn't explain it. I could. Obi was special.

In the Science room each class worked hard to get the Obi reward. He ended up visiting about twice a term and the children never got sick of it. Science lessons had minimal behavior issues and a fairly high output of work. On Obi days there was a buzz around the school. Obi developed his own daily routines. In the morning he would follow me around, never on lead, as I got organized. He would visit every person we came across and they were always happy to give him a pat. During lessons he had free run of the classroom. Obi would get a scratch from every student.

Obi amazed me with his natural instincts; he seemed to have super powers. He always knew which students needed an extra hug, who needed to laugh, who simply wanted to sit with him and whom he could slobber with kisses. At the end of each lesson he would perform his tricks: find the torch, speak on command, roll over, combat crawl and eventually wave goodbye. The students loved it.

At recess and lunchtime he would join me on yard duty. This ensured he saw every student in the school. There were never any behavior problems on Obi days. He was the highlight of their school term.

Stories from Tales2Inspire ~ The Sapphire Collection

Years later when I'd run into some of those students, the first thing they would ask was "How's Obi?"



Ashley's daughters with Obi and Stitch

My own children came into this world and were instantly hooked by the magic of Obi. They would pester him, chew his ear, climb on him and chase him around. No matter what they did to Obi, he still followed them everywhere. When we went for a walk, he would position himself next to the pram. As they started to become more mobile, he would be right next to them wherever they went.

The girls loved playing hide and seek although Obi would always find them in a flash. Obi was a big part of their world. On Obi's eighth birthday we brought home Stitch – another yellow Labrador. This gave Obi a new challenge; he had to train the puppy. By this stage Obi was also coming to work with me. He had become a demonstration dog in a program where at risk youth train Labradors as companion dogs for children with special needs.

My Special Boy, Obi

Everyone wanted to work with Obi. He was of course perfectly trained, but he was also a clown!

One of the first students Obi worked with had come from a really dark place. He was anti-social, distant and often a behavior problem. His teachers and family were concerned because he spent his life by himself, staring at a computer screen. Obi broke through pretty quickly and gave that boy a new outlet in life. Each week this student grew in confidence. He began to communicate with staff and peers. He even came back for the next few years as a mentor and helped other students. Later on he applied for school captain and spoke in front of the whole school. While he didn't win that position, he will always be a winner. Throughout school he kept a photo of Obi in his pocket, as a good luck charm. This student is now studying at University, but he still comes to visit me at work and will always remember Obi.!

As Obi got older he would come to work, but not actually train. He would observe and be the dog that students could talk to. I'm sure he was told many secrets, but he never let on. He was quite happy to sit with anyone and listen. He would still do his tricks and loved to show up the puppies, especially Stitch. The students even taught him how to count. He would bark, once for each finger they held up. The students thought it was great. They used to use this when we worked with the younger students, to show off Obi's math skills. Meanwhile Stitch was quickly learning from his master. They became quite the pair. What one could do, the other could do better. Always with those dopey grins on their faces.

Obi would give so much of himself. At night he would sleep soundly, but every morning he would do it all over again. He touched the lives of many, capturing their hearts and imagination.

We recently said goodbye to Obi. While ten and three quarter years is not a long life for a Lab, Obi certainly crammed a lot more into his time. Even though it was very hard to say goodbye, we will always remember him with a smile. Today I keep that special boy's legacy alive through writing stories about Obi the Super Puppy.

Stories from Tales2Inspire ~ The Sapphire Collection

These stories were inspired by my own girls. They spent lots of time talking to Obi, sharing their adventures together.

They have also helped me create a team of super heroes with Captain Obi as their leader.

We all miss our special boy, but writing about him keeps his memory alive. This beautiful poem, written by a family friend, helps keep him in our hearts and the hearts of many whose lives he touched.

*The first lab to lay his head upon my knee
and share a cuddle with a lick or three
Although my eyes are filled with tears,
I thank him for all those happy years,
For his love, loyalty and cheeky smile,
The way he'd lay with me for just a while,
It's with a broken heart and questions why,
That I say a very long goodbye!*

XXX

R.I.P Obi, by Rochelle

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashley Howland lives in Adelaide, South Australia with her husband Ross, two daughters, Maddy and Aijay, and her spoiled Labrador Stitch. Her girls inspire her every day to write children's books. Stitch and the memory of Obi often provide the material. Ashley also works as the curriculum manager for Labs 'n Life. This requires random extra Labradors to appear in their lives and of course in Ashley's stories. You can find more information about Ashley and her books at: <http://ahowland.org> and on her Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/AuthorAshleyHowland>



Ashley Howland

‘My Special Boy, Obi’ is one of the ‘Timeless Memory’ stories published in *Tales2Inspire ~ The SapphireCollection*.

ALL THAT GLITTERS . . .

by Maurice Nadjari

I often had heard my dad say, *All that glitters is not gold*, but it didn't hit home to me until the year 1964. I was assistant DA in Manhattan at the time. One morning DA Frank Hogan called me into his office. "Maury, you're an ambitious young man and a damn good investigator," Hogan said. With that, he assigned me the case which soon became known as *The Heist of the Century*.

This heist took place at the American Museum of Natural History. The burglars escaped with twenty-nine of the museum's most prized gemstones. Imagine the shock of the museum guards later that evening when they discovered that the 563.35 carat Star of India, the 116.75 carat Midnight Star Sapphire and the 100.32 carat Delong Ruby, amongst many other precious gems, were all missing. These three gemstones had been appraised at approximately \$485 thousand dollars in the 1920's. You can just imagine what those three stones would be worth today!

Fifty years have passed. On the golden anniversary of this heist the details are still crystal clear in my memory, as are my dad's cautionary words, "All that glitters is not gold".

Here is their story . . . and mine.

Three Florida beach boys, Jack Murphy, Roger Clark and Allan Kuhn, arrived in NYC in style. They parked their sparkling white Cadillac convertible and checked into an upscale hotel suite to the tune of \$525 dollars per night. Jack, better known as *Murf the Surf*, had quite a reputation as a lady's man. His dashing good looks and smooth talking ways acted as magnets to the beautiful women he met on the Miami beaches. He did diving tricks and oiled their backs to keep his reputation alive. Murph and his two companions cooked up a quick fix plan to support their lavish lifestyles. They visited a number of NY museums, looking for the one with the most valuable and easily accessible objects.

They settled on the American Museum of Natural History.

The men enrolled in the museum's after hours gemology course, *Know Your Precious Gems*. Ironically, it was through this course that they learned everything they needed to know about which gems they should take and where they were stored. Jack Murphy decided to test the system. He noticed a little Chinese jade sculpture under a glass dome. Lifting the glass and pocketing the figure, he waited. No alarm sounded. This was a very good sign. He noticed windows on this fifth floor left open a crack to help ventilate the rooms. He now had a clue to how they could break in.

On burglary night, the three men were armed with duct tape, ropes and a few tools. Clark remained outside as a lookout. Murph and Kuhn scaled a fence to the museum courtyard, scrambled up a fire escape and secured a rope to a pillar just above one of the fourth floor windows. After hoisting themselves up, they used their feet to push down on the frame of one of the partially opened windows to lower the sash and squeeze themselves through. By timing their maneuvers between the rounds of the guard to the J.P. Morgan Hall of Gems and Minerals, they pocketed the twenty-nine most valuable gems of the museum's collection.

Flush with success, the three robbers came back to their hotel suite to celebrate. They held a grand party. The next day Murphy and Kuhn left for Florida with one of their new young women friends acting as the gem courier. But this time Lady Luck was not on their side. One of the guests at this lavish party happened to be a police informant on post at the hotel. He had noticed scattered about the room some burglary tools and a sketch showing the location of each gem in the museum's collection. The next morning he gave all this information to the detective in charge of the theft.

When Clark returned to the hotel room to pick up some of his clothes, the detective in charge was waiting. Under questioning, Clark confessed. The Miami FBI were alerted and arrested Murphy and Kuhn. Within thirty-six hours of the theft, all three men had been

captured and arraigned on a burglary charge. But the presiding judge considered this case shaky at best. After all, no one had been hurt. He set the bail at \$1000.

This was little more than a slap on the wrist to three men newly flush with jewels valued in the millions. We had two problems: an indictment without enough evidence for a conviction, and three handsome young men, dressed to the nines, who presented like the Robin Hoods of America. People even were gathering outside the courtroom to shake their hands. By comparison, we looked like the heavies. How could we make them look like the thieves that they were? We needed more ammunition.

I decided to search the files for unsolved cases. It took some time, but I finally struck pay dirt. While staying at the Algonquin Hotel, the actress Eva Gabor, well known for her fabulous jewel collection, had been robbed by three men. The ring they wrestled from her finger was worth tens of thousands of dollars. But worse yet were the jeweled earrings the thugs had ripped from her earlobes. Once Eva was able to pick out the three men from a photo lineup, I knew we had a solid case.

The thieves were arrested for the assault and robbery of this beautiful celebrity and thrown into jail. This time bail was set at \$100,000. I knew it wouldn't be long before one of the three would cave. Jail accommodations were no match for the high rolling lifestyle of these crooks. And I was right. Within four hours Kuhn had contacted me. He tried to negotiate, saying he would fly down to Miami and get the stolen jewels, but I wasn't about to let him out of my sight. I was going with him.

Staying just steps ahead of reporters and photographers, jockeying between nearly a dozen hotels and constant phone negotiations, it took more than three days to be led to a locker at the Miami Trailways Bus Terminal where we found two pouches filled with stolen gem stones. They were now safely in my hands.

During the plane ride back to New York, Kuhn began an interesting conversation.

What kind of car do you drive Mr. Nadjari?

All That Glitters . . .

A Chevrolet, I responded.

Oh, I drive a Cadillac, a new one every year.

I smiled as he continued.

What kind of boat do you own?

I answered that I didn't own a boat.

Undaunted, he continued.

I own a twenty-five foot sailboat and a thirty-seven foot motor boat.

I simply nodded.

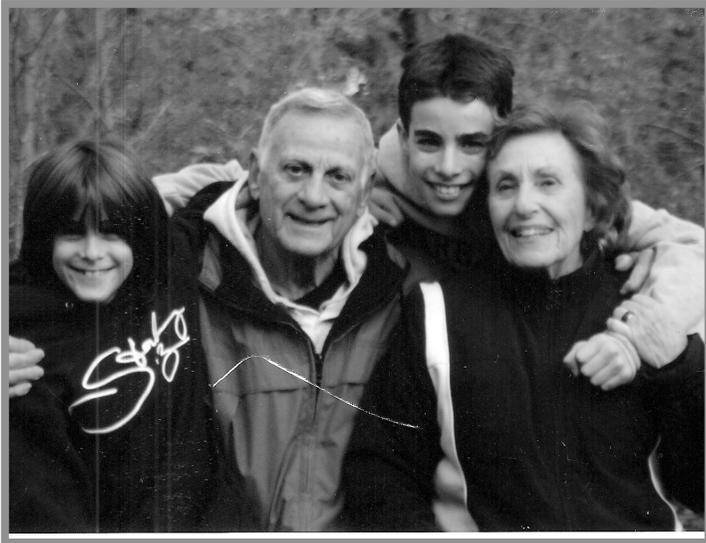
How much do you earn a year, Mr. Nadjari?

I answered truthfully, \$12,000.

What! I spend \$12,000 in one night on a party! How would you like to live like me? Forget this arrest and I'll make that happen.

No thanks, I said without batting an eye. You see tonight I'm going home to my wife and children. That's what freedom feels like. But, you're going straight to jail, locked up for a long time.

And, that's when my dad's words, All that glitters is not gold hit home to me.



*Maury with his wife and two sons
"That's what freedom feels like!"*

Stories from Tales2Inspire ~ The Sapphire Collection



Hogan paying special tribute to Maurice Nadjari, right foreground, at press conference Jan. 08, 1965.

All That Glitters . . . ' is now published in
Tales2Inspire ~ The Sapphire Collection,
a book of Timeless Memories.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

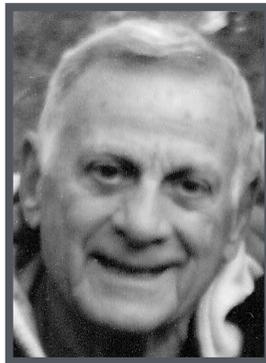
I am a retired attorney, a home grown New Yorker. I went to college for my B.A. and law degrees in NYC.

I was inducted into the army during WWII. I served in both the European and Pacific theaters of operation.

As an attorney, I spent twenty-five years as a prosecutor in three different posts: fourteen years as an ADA in Manhattan, where I worked with some of the finest lawyers I have ever known. Those years were amongst the happiest of my life. I tried some two hundred and fifty felony cases, dealing with every crime in the books, including the theft of rare gems from the American Museum of Natural History.

My second post was chief assistant DA in Suffolk County. I spent five years doing that. Thereafter, Governor Rockefeller appointed me Special New York State Prosecutor, charged with investigating and prosecuting corruption in the criminal justice system in New York City.

It was a good life. I felt like I was contributing something to the community I served. I enjoyed the challenge so much that I whistled my way to work every morning, unlike some of my friends who “lived lives of quiet desperation”, waiting for Friday evening and dreading Monday morning.



MAURICE NADJARI

*We must better ourselves before the world becomes
a better place.*

ABOUT TALES2INSPIRE ~ THE SAPPHIRE COLLECTION

The Sapphire the symbol for communication, insight and inspiration, brings us a collection of *Timeless Memories* to echo in your mind. A young boy plans a wonderful surprise for his pappy - an opportunity to join some circus band musicians for an afternoon of tooting. Later he learns that he gave his pappy the most special day of his life. A teacher uses her dog to help manage her class of special needs students. A boy with severe behavior problems stops acting out, at first whispering secrets in the dog's ear, later making friends within his class. We hope these award winning stories inspire you, the reader, to recall some of your timeless memories, too precious to be forgotten, to inspire your family and friends.

REVIEWS FOR THE SAPPHIRE COLLECTION

Tales2Inspire – The Sapphire Collection, certainly delivers what it promises just from its title – inspirational stories of universal appeal that enrich the soul, nourish the mind and offer us valuable lessons about living a fulfilling life. This book contains a collection of fourteen non-fiction stories written by authors from a wide range of backgrounds. . . But despite these differences, all of the tales deal with common themes that connect us with each other: serendipity or destiny, spirituality, religion, cherished items that remind us of our heritage, (. . .), lost opportunities, new beginnings, the importance of bringing joy to loved ones and devotion to animals and understanding that they help to make people's lives better. . . this book might just inspire you to make some positive changes to your life!

Iris K. Engels

New York, Corporate and commercial attorney for the publishing, multimedia and entertainment industries

This book is a collection of memorable incidents related by ordinary people with a flair for writing. Editor- cum-author Lois Stern, has in this connection, presented an assortment of stories that “echo in the mind” as these moments are relived over and over again. Some of the contributors are published authors in their own right, others are less well known. The common ground between them all is their passion for the written word. The first story “Hand of Destiny” tells of an incredible coincidence in the

About Tales2Inspire ~ The Sapphire Collection

life of an ex fighter pilot in World War II. Then there is the story of an amazing dog, who was successfully used by his mistress as part of her school management program. . . . Another moving story, which struck a personal chord is about the memories stirred up by a cup of hot chocolate and how it helped ease discord in parent-child relationships.. . .

The writing in each . . . has been painstakingly chiseled to near perfection. Each story is accompanied by one or more photographs and a paragraph about its author. . . . it is clear, that the text has been put together with care and artistry, making it a truly pleasurable read for a lazy summer day.

Bani Sodermark Karlstad, Sweden
Amazon Vine Voice Badge Reviewer

. . . a collection of insightful & inspirational stories (to) help bring about positive changes in the minds of readers. These stories will move the hearts of readers with their personal experiences . . . helping to change one's perspective. The author's idea of bringing different writers together to share their inspirational & motivational stories . . . gives varied echoes to the stories, (each with) an individual voice revolving around the human spirit & the conditions that prevail in human minds. Gives readers a sense of hope and peace.

Mamta Madhavan
Readers Favorite 5 star review

Reading the Sapphire Collection during September seemed fitting to me as this exquisite gem is connected to a month of wisdom, learning and insights. In T. H. Everingham's 'A Birthday Gift for Mom'" the reader is taken back to the simple days of the 1920s. The authors remembers a special gift for his mother that would end up teaching him life lessons of goodness, generosity and sharing. Each of the stories make a unique and meaningful contribution to this memorable collection of heartwarming and inspirational tales. This is an evergreen book - suitable for all ages that would make a perfect gift for the reader in your life who appreciates extraordinary life happenings in the lives of ordinary people. "

Maria Couchara - Jordan, MSN, RN
Nurse; Instructor , *Author of 'Kylie's Blossoms'*;

Tales2Inspire hits a home run to the heart yet again! The Sapphire Collection of Tales2Inspire is yet again a salute to life's experiences. Experiences that build character, form bonds, share memories and open doors of wisdom that are able to touch so many people can only be written from the hearts and minds of those who lived them. . . . All of the stories are well worth the read and I send kudos to each author for their efforts and courage (yes, it often takes courage) yet some stories touch each of us in special ways and provide impact by sharing something that really hits 'home'. The Sapphire Collection had two such stories with that kind of impact for me . . . Sharon Johnson's "God Must Have Wanted Me to Smile" and Rod DiGruttolo's 'Pappy And The Bandleader'. Suffice it to say that I will never look upon a red cardinal again without thinking of Sharon's story. Too, my heart swells for the special bond between Rod and his Pappy as my own grandmother provided me with the 'rock' everyone needs in their life.

Susan C. Haley

Professional editor, Author: *Rainy Days People, Fibers in the Wind*

A LETTER TO MY READERS

Dear Reader,

I hope you have enjoyed the stories in this *Tales2Inspire*® Sampler. Perhaps the name *TALES2INSPIRE* has aroused your interest and even a bit of curiosity. If so, here are answers to some of the questions I am commonly asked.

HOW DID *TALES2INSPIRE* BEGIN?

My innate curiosity about potentially fascinating human interest stories was the spark that ignited this *Tales2Inspire*® project, but it was my feeling of frustration with the current state of traditional publishing that made those sparks blaze. The catch twenty-two today is that many truly talented writers never are given a chance, simply because they do not have a proven track record. So I began to create an alternate path for these authors, seeking ways to help strengthen their opportunities for discovery and name recognition.

Tales2Inspire® was a kernel of an idea that I started in 2012, which has grown to proportions even I didn't dare to envision. It delivers exactly what it promises as both an 'Authors Helping Authors' project and a contest. Winners get their stories published in print, e-book, and possible audio formats, with their names, headshot photos, and mini-autobiographies included.

Authors whose stories are accepted for publication get some significant platform building boosts. Each winner has a blog page to highlight their story, which I promote on a rotating basis both on the social media and on my monthly newsletter and recycle them throughout the years. I also create videos about many of the stories and use them in my presentations to various groups throughout the year.

Below you can find some of the questions I am commonly asked about *Tales2Inspire*®, with my answers.

WHAT IS TALES2INSPIRE?

Tales2Inspire® began as an *Authors Helping Authors* project as well as a contest. It is FREE to enter and provides winners and selected finalists with some exciting platform building opportunities. To understand *What is in it For You*, watch this video of the same title at www.youtube.com/winningtales.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Authors who participate in this project carefully craft their stories prior to submission. I personally review each story as it is received, and give its author basic feedback before the judging phase begins.

Stories accepted into this competition are then judged by a jury of three peers, using a click, click, click automated form. Each judge also offers a brief critique to include one suggestion for improving the story - unless of course they gave it a perfect score. If there is basic consistency in the judges' scores (which happens most of the time), I total them and assign Winner, Finalist and Honorable Mention awards based on those score averages. When an occasional wide discrepancy occurs amongst the three judges' scores, I call upon members of my critique group for further input.

But it doesn't end there. Unlike most every other contest, even after the awards are announced, I will continue to work with the author of a 'tale' which shows unique promise. I do not charge for any of these services because I am committed to the ideal of "Authors Helping Authors". In return, each author gives me first rights to publication of their 'tale', by signing and returning a release form along with their submission.

WHY DID I START THIS TALES2INSPIRE PROJECT?

Despite having published two books about aesthetics (beauty of the face and body), I have forever been drawn to inner beauty stories,

that touch the heart, mind and soul. I began writing stories about people whom I admired and eventually began inviting others to share their inspiring stories.

It is no secret that many talented writers and seasoned authors alike remain undiscovered. *Tales2Inspire*® provides the best-of-the-best with an opportunity to get one compelling story published, and start them on the road to several strong branding and platform building opportunities.

Visit the Tales2Inspire website at: www.tales2inspire.com to learn details such as themes, how to submit a story, the way winning stories are chosen, how winning authors are promoted both in the press and on the internet. Let me end by wishing each of my *Tales2Inspire* authors and aspiring authors success as they move forward in their writing careers. Know that I'll be standing behind each of you as part of your personal cheering squad! If you enjoyed the inspiring stories in this *Tales2Inspire* sampler, there's much more.

THE GEMSTONE/THEME CONNECTION

The gemstone appearing on the cover of each *Tales2Inspire*® collection was selected with care, as each gemstone has a symbolic meaning that relates to the theme of the stories within that particular book.

The Emerald symbolizes intuitive awareness, the root underpinnings to past, present and future interconnections, the perfect gem to represent a collection of *Beyond Coincidence* stories.

The Topaz symbolizes the promotion of self-realization and confidence, just as the *Personal Awakenings* moments found within the stories of this collection.

The Sapphire is best known as a facilitator for communication, insight and inspiration, an ideal symbol for a collection of stories that truly *Echo in the Mind* as 'Timeless Memories'.

The Ruby, the symbol for friendship and love, fits perfectly with our *Gift of Compassion* stories found in this collection of stories.

A Letter to My Readers

The Garnet, the symbol known to revitalize us and boost our energy, seemed like the perfect symbol for *Stories in Feathers and Fur*; since this is exactly what our animal friends do for us.

The Crystal is known for its healing properties. Since humor has a unique way of healing us, by lifting our spirits, transporting us from the here and now to several moments of pure amusement, it seemed a fitting way to symbolize this collection of stories.

The Pearl, the symbol for youth, shares good news stories about children, teenagers and (young) adults who are sincerely making a positive difference in our world.

The Opal, the karmic stone, encourages positive emotions, teaching us that what we put out, comes back to us.

More *Tales2Inspire*® books coming soon.

All *Tales2Inspire* books are available at: [amazon.com/](https://www.amazon.com/),
BarnesNobles.com and by special order at public libraries and
popular brick and mortar bookstores.