

:: Dana's Weekly Insight :: 10.15.07 – Learning Curve



Have you ever wished that you had something, that you didn't know exactly how you were going to get, and then as if by magic, somehow you just got it?

I remember lying there on Julie Rich's front lawn staring at the stars sprinkled so generously across the autumn sky, and feeling lucky. I was six years old and the world, as far as I was concerned, was created for me and my best friend. Curled up on a cozy wool blanket, we each had our own box of cracker jacks. We were in heaven as we munched, and naïve as we tried to count all of those beautiful stars. Then, as if divinely orchestrated just for us, a shooting star cruised across our autumn sky -- beckoning. And so, we made a wish.

That night - I learned how to hope.

I learned how to hope that night because waiting for me the next morning when I got home, were my grandparents with the Easy Bake oven that I had secretly wished for when I responded to that shooting star. I was surprised and yet it was exactly as it should have been. When you are six years old you are free to expect beyond reason that what you want you will get, without ever having to figure out how. The world still yields itself to you on demand and so it's easy to just expect. But then, you grow up and the world expands and wishing on a shooting star almost never gets you what you want. So you dare to dream while you privately pray for things that you are secretly convinced you will never ever get...

She was about 50 years old when she started dreaming about something that she had no reason to believe would ever come true. She was 82 years old the day the high school band in her little hometown of Eskridge, Kansas, along with the entire town, came out to honor her one woman crusade. It was the biggest and most exciting day of Maisie DeVore's entire life and even the people who had named her "Crazy Maisie" had no choice now but to concede because --

Once a month for thirty years, Maisie traveled a forty mile loop around the Kansas country side, collecting aluminum cans and reselling them to the local recycling center so that she could build a swimming pool for the kids in her home town. As a mother of four young children, Maisie DeVore was frustrated that the kids in her community didn't have a way to play and cool off during those long hot summer days. She dreamed of what it would be like for the children in Eskridge to be able to swim

and have fun but the town could not afford to build a pool. So, rather than just sitting around merely wishing for the day; simply hoping, Maisie decided that she would raise the money and pay for the pool herself. One can after another and for three decades, Maisie Devore earned a nickel at a time, and even though it made no sense to anybody else, she kept on collecting cans until she had earned a total of \$83,000 and the town built Maisie that pool.

That commitment - it taught a lot of people what it means to believe.

Imagine.

Sometimes having what you want will require nothing more from you than making a wish that you keep to yourself, but most of the time you will be required to dream your dream out loud. Sometimes prayers get answered overnight but if and when yours don't, just how long will you dare to believe?

I have often had to wrestle with my resentment of the reality that we live in a world where inconsequential wishes seem to magically and effortlessly come true while many a considerable dream will take what seems like a lifetime to fulfill. So, I have had to resolve for myself that I will faithfully fight my way back to a place beyond my temptation to just give up and settle for what I don't have to pursue.

And you?

Believing that you can have what you want isn't something that everybody is willing to do because there are no guarantees. Wishing on a shooting star - that alone might get you a good parking space but it probably won't get you THE PRIZE.

These days the people of Eskridge, Kansas refer to Maisie Devore as "Amazing Maisie" and she responds --

"I just really couldn't comprehend that it actually was gonna come to pass. Even though I thought it was, it still gives me a funny feeling to realize that it has. If you want something and pursue it with all of your mind, you'll get it done one way or another. I had a lot of set backs along the way but I still kept plugging along and I got it finally."

We need those magical moments like the one I had with my best friend Julie Rich because they teach us how to hope, but we all learn by being tested, what it really means to believe. Little kids just accept, without really having to be concerned with how they will get the things that they want. Adults almost always have to put up a fight.

But,

when you are willing to do whatever it takes; when you are faithful in continuing to put one foot in front of the other in order to follow your dream, day after day, nickel by nickel, the people who once referred to you as crazy, will have no choice one day but -

to concede.

Dana

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