



Chapter Ten

JOY IN THE MORNING

Psalm 34: 18

The Lord is close to the broken hearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

MASTER PLANNER

Every part of nature teaches that the passing of life is an inevitable event for all of God's creation. Although it usually appears as a wonderful gradation and harmony that reflects the changing of seasons, the unexpected chill of life's coldest December when a loved one abruptly departs makes the human heart feel icy bruised and broken.

Psalm 31: 9 best describes the desperation of those left behind using the words, "O' Lord have mercy on me in my anguish. My eyes are red from weeping; my health is broken from sorrow."

Thus, the Master Planner must have known that it was necessary for tomorrow's pain to be screened from our eyes because of mankind's inability to handle preannounced sorrow. Perhaps it was designed in this manner to allow His children to savor each day's blend of happiness and sadness in morsel sized pieces. Certainly, one thing Scriptures make clear is that God knows precisely how much each person can handle without exacting too great a cost.

However, the most important truth to remember during the dark moments of our journey is that God will never leave or forsake His children; guaranteeing dawn to follow the blackest night. Psalm 30: 5b supports this view by stating, "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning."

HITTING THE STREETS

Due to a dry spell of clients requesting Dick's services as a designer as well as the joyous arrival of more children, he knew it was time to hit the streets with his resume. Desperately in need of income to support his growing family, he first began his search by showing his work to houses that made cheaper clothing. At this point, his sketches called for a crepe fabric that was draped and wrapped on the body which received raving reviews by everyone. He even created sketches especially for Dorothy O'Hara that were show stoppers she absolutely adored. Unfortunately, lacking experience in the field meant that no fashion house wanted to take a chance on him.

Undaunted by rejection, in pursuit of his dream to create clothing for couture houses in Los Angeles, he also interviewed with Edith Head who was popular for her movie costume designs. It took only a glance at his sketches for her to immediately offer him a position with her company. However, it was during the interview when observing an entire room filled with young artists straddling chairs busily sketching designs that he asked Edith to show him the garment construction area. Unfortunately, her immediate response was to inform him that he was being hired exclusively as a sketcher.

Consequently, even though he desperately needed a higher income, the knowledge that he would be pigeon holed as a sketcher, caused him to courageously decline her offer and continue to work at Leeds Shoe Store.

However, his lifelong passion to sew women's clothing soon prompted him to approach Don Miguel, a designer couture house in Los Angeles that specialized in "after 5" and evening dresses. Again, realizing his stumbling block would be his lack of industry experience he "LIED THROUGH HIS TEETH" by saying he had worked for a design company in New Orleans, Louisiana. Today, when he revisits this interview, he shakes his head in disbelief at his ignorance for lying and ignorantly choosing a city where no design company even existed. Laughing loudly, Dick exclaimed, "HOW STUPID OF ME! THE ONLY REASON HE TOOK A CHANCE ON ME WAS BECAUSE HE LIKED MY SKETCHES. HE KNEW FULL WELL NO DESIGN COMPANY EVEN EXISTED IN NEW ORLEANS!" Although Dick's sophisticated sketches had caught Don Miguel's eye the deal was not yet sealed. The interview for the position had just begun. "The proof was still in the pudding to come!"

Next in the interview process, Dick was given a trial of making a pattern for one of his sketches that had to come together perfectly. In order to complete this phase, he was sent to a room where a woman named Raquel was assigned to him as an evaluator and observer. Raquel "Rae" watched every move he made as if he were under a microscope. Without flinching, Dick knew the first challenge would be in using a dress form rather than a human

body for the purpose of sizing the garment. All his past experience had been built around French draping the fabric right on a live person. However, in his mind, since this presented absolutely no challenge, he went to work with great assurance.

After being handed soft muslin for the design work, his next step was to transfer it to a pattern. Quickly scanning the room, he noticed all the existing patterns had even cutouts that showed the exact size of the seams. As he tried to duplicate the process on his pattern, Rae asked, "Don't you have a notching tool?" Drawing in his breath, he had to admit this was a tool he did not possess, thus, prompting her to fetch one for him. Since he had been self taught, other than a little schooling following his career in the navy, he never received instruction in this technique. Dick Du Puis had simply taught himself to sew without any methodology and used his own common sense and creativity, instead.

Consequently, when the tool arrived, he viewed it as a miracle because it would notch through four layers of material at once. In Dick's mind, it was a very simple tool that he took to like a duck to water. (At this point, Dick paused to make it very clear that after this experience, he purchased a book and taught himself to draft. From that moment forward, the book became his career Bible.)

Finally, after completing his pattern and cutting it out, he confidently handed it to Rae. As if right on cue, at that moment, Miguel entered the room and asked Rae how it was going together. Using no words, she simply made the "OK" sign over her shoulder. Therefore, it was at this critical moment in time that Dick Du Puis, a little boy who had been born with a fire in his belly for sewing, landed the job of his life. His childhood dream of becoming a fashion designer was no longer a thought but reality.

As a result of being given a chance, Dick first started making patterns and within six months was invited to show his sketches to Don Miguel. Those breath taking sketches that only Dick could draw were not only accepted, but resulted in him designing the entire line for the company within only a year. Now on track, the sky was the limit!

HOUSE IN ANAHEIM

At the same time Dick was launching his career as a designer, it was apparent the trailer was no longer spacious enough to accommodate his growing family. Therefore, Dick and Jo Anne sold their trailer and used it as a down payment for a new home in Anaheim that was located within view of the Disneyland Hotel.

Settling in quickly, Dick had immediately designed the backyard into a beautiful Japanese garden paradise. Unfortunately, after arriving home from work one evening, he found that, without asking, his not so favorite mother-in-law had purchased and enormous jungle gym

and ordered it placed right in the middle of the manicured garden even though the children's play area was along the side of the house.

In addition to this unwelcome gesture, on another occasion, he entered his home to find she had totally rearranged the family room to the point of removing an aquarium as well as an entire wall. Upon arrival, he had wondered why the sofa, chair and table were setting out in the garage. Then when entering the redecorated family room, he found a baby grand piano sprawling in the center; all for her daughter Jo Anne. His mother-in-law's generous gesture had left absolutely no space to even walk around the room, much less to use as a functioning space for the family members. Needless to say, there was trouble in "River City" that night.

HOME IN CANOGA PARK

Within two years, in order to accommodate the needs of an active family, Dick and Jo Anne began the process of building a four bedroom home located in Canoga Park. Even though it was in California, they still made sure the living room contained a fireplace that was used creatively every Christmas morning. As Jo Anne sat with the children in the living room, they would be suddenly surprised to hear Dick playing Santa loudly arriving on their roof. Then, Santa would call down the chimney, "Have you been good little girls and boys?" Neal, their mischief maker, would excitedly look up the chimney and assure Santa that his behavior was absolutely stellar. This humorous lively conversation would then end as presents tumbled down the chimney onto the floor causing screams and fits of laughter.

Another experience involving their impish son, Neal, revolved around a client's wedding. Since Dick was now well established as a fashion designer with the house of Don Miguel, his entire family was invited to attend a client's very fancy wedding.

In preparation, Dick carefully designed and sewed each member of his family a beautiful outfit. All decked out in their finery, the family had been on the road for several miles when their little girl Jodi informed them of a problem in the back seat by stating, "Daddy, you'd better look at Neal!" Without turning around, Dick replied by saying, "Neal, quit whatever it is you're doing." This conversation went on until Jodi dramatically called out, 'DADDY, YOU REALLY NEED TO LOOK AT NEAL!'

At this point, both parents glanced in the back to find Neal stark naked, wearing only an enormous mischievous smile. As they had driven the many miles toward their final destination, Neal had proceeded to strip and throw his clothes one by one out the window into the unknown.

Therefore, upon arriving in a strange city without time to spare, Dick frantically searched from store to store piecing together an outfit for Neal to wear. As a result, the family finally

walked down the aisle of the church all in their finery except for Neal who was dressed in a sun suit. He stood out by wearing a mix and match of clothing that spoke volumes to one and all about his larger than life personality.

MOTHER-IN-LAW TROUBLES AGAIN

Even though things settled down a bit after each dramatic event caused by the interference from his mother-in-law, it would be only a matter of time before the next eruption occurred. She was definitely a force with which to deal and one Jo Anne was powerless to overcome. Therefore, the once happy couple found themselves more and more at odds as each battle ensued.

Once, when it was determined that a new station wagon was needed to accommodate the family of seven, one was ordered in a rich cream with wood trim. Then upon being told the vehicle had arrived, Dick drove to the dealership to find that his mother-in-law had made arrangements to change the choice of color to a bright pink with gray trim. One can only imagine Dick's face as he shockingly stared at the station wagon that he would now be driving.

Another horrible situation occurred during the selection process for colors in their new kitchen. Upon arriving home from work, Dick discovered all the appliances had been replaced from white to pink. Therefore, the color scheme previously selected no longer existed. His new kitchen décor now matched the station wagon; pink and gray.

As Dick sadly reflected back to this time of chaos and interference, he openly admitted that Jo Anne submitted to the influence of her mother and played right along learning how to use it as a weapon in their disagreements. At no time did she show courage enough to push back. Instead, she would pack up the children and move in with her mother which served as a united fort of resistance.

In retrospect, Dick still feels puzzled by the rapid pace at which his marriage unraveled. As a breadwinner, he felt his wife was lavished with everything she desired and more. Unfortunately, since no mature discussion ever transpired between Jo Anne and Dick, he still looks back today with not only sadness, but how different things might have been with peace as the conclusion. Certainly, he is cognizant that two sides exist in every relationship. Perhaps, in all its dysfunction, this was a message from his wife that she simply desired more say in day to day decisions.

However, regardless of all the possible conjectures, the fact remains that, upon arriving home one evening, the locks had been changed and divorced papers filed. There was no turning back for either of them.

DARKNESS ARRIVES

Unfortunately, the summer days that gave her bloom were now made lifeless and bare for not only two people whose vows were broken, but even more so for five precious suffering children. Now working two jobs in order to comply with the judge's orders for alimony and child support, day and night had no separation for Dick Du Puis. Without a place to stay, he slept in his office and took daily showers at the Greyhound Bus Terminal. His one luxury was to walk through the men's cosmetic department at May Company and spritz expensive sample cologne on his person as a way of feeling somewhat human.

Then, as if things were not difficult enough, Dick was informed that Jo Anne would now remarry and add even more stress into the lives of their children. Thus, it was on her wedding day, as she was traveling with her new husband by car that the darkest moment was fast approaching.

Thus, completely on the other side of the world where Dick was busy purchasing fabric for clothing designs, was where he received the worst possible news. Through an interpreter he was told by a total stranger that Jo Anne and her new husband had just been in a car accident which resulted in paralyzing her entire body.

Therefore, in a state of total shock, Dick quickly flew home and arrived at the hospital in haste. Today, in his eighties, Dick still vividly recalls Jo Anne's arms reaching for him as he entered the room. The two people, who had been so drawn toward one another and had failed so miserably to settle differences, still wore love in their hearts.

Then, two years later, Dick was once again summoned to the hospital where he would make a heart breaking decision on behalf of his children. Since Jo Anne's new husband made the decision to depart the relationship, Dick had to give the order for life support to be discontinued for the mother of his children. Therefore, at age 33, Jo Anne departed this earth leaving behind five little children who would now be totally dependent upon their father. At this moment, there must have been a bell sounding the slow mournful death knoll in each sad little child's heart. Although three of the five children were too young to understand their circumstances, tears and sorrow always find a crack in the heart of even the young where they enter uninvited.

At this point, dear readers, it is important to stress how difficult it was for the writer to observe the hidden pain that was long buried in Dick's heart stir once again. The intricate details of many aspects of the tragedy lay uncaptured and unrevealed----and yet remained unforgotten. His love song had ended, replaced by a deafening quiet that had now entered the walls of his heart. Yet, with grouping fingers now clutching the empty air, he fully recognized the past would be only for him a yearning that must quickly be locked in his

breast. His calling card had just changed to now read, “DICK DU PUIS, BOTH FATHER AND MOTHER.” At this point in his life, he knew five little children’s hands were reaching for the security of their father’s trembling arms. His cozy-tight little world had just been rocked to the core. How was one to gain his composure and steady his step in the face of such tragedy?

Then following his usual pattern of behavior when facing difficulties, he raised his face toward the sky with the knowledge there would be another spring. The flowers would burst forth in color and fragrance signaling a new beginning. By placing one foot in front of the other, a new day would dawn when his pain and sorrow would be gone. Jeremiah 31: 13 best summarizes this moment in Dick’s life with the words, “I will turn their mourning into gladness. I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.” By leaning on God during the troubled days ahead, Dick reasoned beyond doubt that his sad eyes would once again be made glad as joy arrived in the morning.



A TRIBUTE TO JO ANNE FROM DICK

(THE FOLLOWING PHOTOGRAPHS HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY DICK AS A TRIBUTE TO JO ANNE)



Jo Anne Easter Morning



*Jo Anne Doing a Fashion
Shoot in Los Angeles*



Jo Anne, Age 18 First Year of Marriage to Dick



Jo Anne Really Pregnant



Jo Anne at the Beach