

Following my own voice

by **Connie Brisson**

When I was in Grade 3, our teacher, tired of having us write 'boyfriend/girlfriend' stories, told us to write a story about something (anything!) else.

After she reprimanded us and told us to rewrite it, the classroom fell quiet and everyone went to work on rewriting their stories. I sat there dispirited, not sure what to write about when I heard a man's voice, behind me, clearly say: "You are going to be a writer."

What? I looked behind me to see who was speaking, but no one was there. All the students were busy writing at their desks and the female teacher was at the front of the room. I just sort of shook my head to clear it, but then I heard him again: "You are going to be a writer."

This time, I realized something amazing had just occurred (as there was no one physically there). I looked around; no one else seemed to hear this unseen man's voice. At that moment I knew, deep inside, that a mystical and divine thing had just happened to me. Even when the teacher gave me a 'C' grade on my new story, I didn't care, because I was going to be a writer!

I need to explain that this 'new found' belief in myself was a big leap for me. I started school very young and struggled from the beginning. I was behind most of the others and, to have someone tell me that I would be a writer, was like saying that I would someday be the Queen of England. It was very unlikely, but this 'voice' had not said this to anyone else that day - it had only spoken to me.

I wish I could say, after that, I loved to read and write but I didn't. In fact, not much changed. It was like I had this big secret inside of me but nothing in my life had transformed otherwise. But as time went by, I did learn to love to read. Then in high school, I had a wonderful English teacher (Mrs. Perry) who thought I was a good writer and encouraged me to continue with it.

When high school was over, I worked for a few years and then applied for Journalism at Grant MacEwan. Even then, the only reason I went to Journalism was because of the voice I heard in Grade 3. I still didn't have a burning desire

to write about anything. But if I was going to be a writer, I knew I needed someone to 'teach' me how to write.

I loved the writing, I loved the photography and I loved the graphic design and layout, but when it was all over and done, I really disliked working as a reporter for weekly newspapers. So it was with much regret (especially in myself for having believed in that voice), that I ended up abandoning writing to become an Executive Assistant instead.

Yet, almost 20 years later... in the midst of my awakening spiritual journey, and Catherine Potter passing on the reins of Mosaic Magazine to me, that amazing voice I heard in Grade 3 made DIVINE sense.

It might seem crazy that I ended up here, right now talking to you, because of a voice I heard so many years ago, yet I think there is a voice in all of us that tells us what dreams we need to follow and where we will shine (and serve) best.

After I was 'told' I would be a writer, I struggled with what I would ever write about and even now, I often tussle with what to write about in each Mosaic. In the end, I tell stories about 'what I know for sure' - my experiences/challenges and the many little miracles that happen to me along the way that help me to grow, learn and change.

When I write it is my goal to be open, honest and real, because I value those traits. I know that I can instantly change from hearing the true stories of others, and so, when I share my stories, it's always with the intention to help others. I never tell a story *just* to tell it. If I tell you a story about my life it's because I've learned something I hope will help you with your life in some way.

Sometimes telling a personal story about my life can leave me feeling vulnerable, like I've told a big secret. But I know that my secrets are everyone's secrets. We aren't very different, any of us. We're all travelers on the same journey, facing many of the same things camouflaged in different packages.

I truly do believe that we change each other when we *tell* our truth and when we *follow* our truth. I think that's why I'm a writer... so I'd follow my own 'voice'.

Connie



detail of In Dreams © Lorraine Shulba — www.ishulba.com