

THE APOLOGY



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a "Gentle Soul"



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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, I have been blessed by receiving the greatest gift of all - having my spirit broken. Upon my gentle soul, the deepest levels of emotional pain and cruelty have been inflicted. And yet, I am both blessed and honored to have healed my heart and soul, while learning the greatest life lesson of all - how to love all life unconditionally.

I have also been gifted with the ability to completely forgive those who have caused me harm, and attempted to take control over my life: my own family members. I was belittled, betrayed, bullied, manipulated, humiliated, lied to, judged, criticized and set up. I could go on...

While this confession hurts, these words - *this sacred truth* - about my beloved family no less, has turned out to be a gift and a lesson. Without my ability to speak such truths, the necessary lessons imparted on those who wronged me would not have been expressed. And without them, those individuals would not have been able to recognize the choices of which each have made.

"The Apology" is a story about life and the lessons we choose to learn. For me, it was truly a gift from God to be able to heal, so I could forgive my siblings and others closest to me. I am now able to share my experiences with others who may have excised those from their lives who have caused them pain. In my case, I needed to go through each and every hardship, in order to free my soul from anger, as well as establish boundaries to neutralize any negativity from others.

If one chooses not to accept another's anger, it will have nowhere to go, thus bouncing back to the sender. If all mankind could act towards each other with kindness and love, from their heart and not from their ego, there would be much more compassion and peace in the world.

As family and friends, both young and old, are truly our greatest teachers, we must freely connect with them, sharing in one another's life paths and lessons in order that we can better work on our own soul's purpose during our time on this earth plane.

1. BEFORE I WAS BORN: THE BEGINNING OF MY LIFE STORY

What if, collectively, we chose to embrace forgiveness over condemnation? ~ Daniel Lawrence

Before consenting to marry my father, my mother, Merle, sought the advice of her minister.

“It would be best for your marriage if you could embrace John’s religion,” he said, his voice expressing conviction. And so she did.

My dad was a staunch Catholic, his oldest brother Thomas, becoming an Archbishop. He was also the youngest of seven children, having three sisters and three brothers. In earnest, mom started learning all about the Catholic faith from her brother-in-law to be.

Their wedding took place in my dad’s hometown of Hartford City, Indiana. Marring their joyous day was my mom’s Methodist family, who found it very difficult to accept her conversion. Despite this, John Alexander and Merle Annabel, by God’s grace were married, and she was much loved by his siblings.

Dad was working for his father, in the savings-and-loan business. Soon after, a baby boy, Alexander, was born, but tragically he would live for less than a day. Throughout this devastating loss, Merle’s new family provided her with much comfort and love.

One year later on August 2, 1939, my older sister Marie, was born. And exactly one year after that on August 2, 1940, my sister, Annabelle, was born. During this time, my dad and his father had a business disagreement, and dad began thinking it might be time for a career move.

Soon after, mom’s dad was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, so mom went to her home town in northern Ontario to be with him. As dad drove to meet her there, he picked up a hitchhiker who told him he was going to Sudbury to homestead a piece of property. Dad thought that was a great idea, so together, he and mom and their two daughters moved to nearby Nipissing, Canada.

It was here where my parents built a log cabin. The structure had a three-hole outhouse, and a wind charger for power to help keep the meat frozen. In order to support the family, dad raised minks. Their furs were popular in women’s mink collars and coats, and, in such a remote location, it was one of the few ways to earn an income. Dad almost lost a finger when one of the minks bit him, but swore it was his wedding band that saved his finger from being severed.

In 1941, after the birth of her fourth child, mom became very ill, her condition soon escalating from serious to critical. She was taken by dogsled across a frozen lake to a Catholic hospital, where she almost died of pneumonia. She did eventually recover, crediting the nuns at the hospital with saving her life. My sister was named Patty, in honor of one of the nuns.

Dad realized how close he came to losing his wife in this secluded area of Canada. That, and wanting my sisters to have a good education, triggered another move, this time, to Detroit, Michigan.

While dad was ineligible to join the United States army, despite the country being in the middle of a second world war, he wanted to do something to contribute. He took a job at the Hartford Motor Plant which at the time, was in the business of building tanks. Dad was in charge of women workers - “Rosie the Riveters” as they began to be called.

During the war, many products were rationed, with coupons issued per family for basic items such as sugar and flour. My sisters recall mom bundling up the family as they walked to the store to get a bag of rationed sugar. The weather was freezing and after standing for

hours in long lines, mom's feet were nearly frozen. Mom was ultimately diagnosed with having rheumatoid arthritis, and on the advice of her doctors, my parents made the difficult decision to move to Prescott, Arizona, where the weather would be warmer.

In 1942, after the birth of Johnny, my brother, off they went, with dad giving up a bright future and a great job in the automobile business.

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Dad and mom moved to an area of Prescott, Arizona called "The Mountain Club." It was located high in the hills and considered a "better" area in which to raise a family. For a few months they lived in a small rental house while dad built a permanent home. As the only jobs available to dad were either in bartending or construction, he opted for the latter, building a couple of speculative homes on the land they owned. With the exception of the log cabin he built in Canada, these homes marked dad's first, real beginnings as a builder.

Unfortunately, the spec homes didn't sell for quite a long while and finances became a problem. When a friend of dad's, Mrs. Law, mentioned she was going through a divorce and would need some stables built for the horses she was expecting as part of her divorce settlement, dad headed up to Redding, California. He drove a flatbed truck which he recently bought, in anticipation of the work.

Mrs. Law's 19-year-old daughter, Eleanor, helped mom and her children - Marie, Annabelle, Patty, Johnny, and Thomas who was named after Dad's brother Reverend Thomas, on the long road trip from Prescott to Redding.

During the journey, one of the car's well-worn tires blew out. After paying for four replacement tires, mom didn't have enough money to continue. She stopped at a local Catholic Parish House to see if the Priest could lend her some money, but he was without any to give.

The family survived on eating cans of soup, once stopping at a roadside diner to ask a waitress to heat their food. The waitress generously supplied saltine crackers, and a kind customer bought the children ice cream cones. Marie recalls being confused when mom began to cry, presumably, at the kindness they received.

Eventually, the family was reunited in Redding, only to learn that Mrs. Law did not get the horses and as such, no stables needed to be built. The news was a huge disappointment as dad was counting on this job.

Dad subsequently visited several orchards in the area, seeking to haul fruit for farms in Redding and Marysville. He was hired by a farmer who let the family stay in a one-room, shack-like building. Dad was employed to haul peaches, and Marie remembers the kids being given the juicy fruits in abundance to eat. Their living environment however, was wholly inadequate: walls were covered with newspapers for insulation and mom was convinced spiders and other bugs took up residence behind the nailed paper. She became so concerned that she ripped off the newspaper, but not a single bug could be found.

Dad began to suffer from migraines a few weeks later, likely due to the heat, thus, the summer was spent camping around Mount Lassen and Yosemite National Park.

Dad bought a used army tent, spread hay on the ground to keep dust to a minimum, and everyone slept on army cots. Marie loved this summer, too young to understand how poor the family was. Another road trip was taken, this time, a restaurant named "Val's" off Highway 101 proved to be a valuable stop, with the owner of the restaurant taking a liking to mom, dad, and "their well-behaved children." The family was permitted to park overnight in

the restaurant's lot, and dad learned that the Santa Clara Valley was the epicenter of the big boom that would later become known as Silicon Valley.

Boasting pleasant weather throughout most of the year, Santa Clara seemed a good place to settle down. Dad went ahead, alone, and found work in construction, working for a gentleman named Dan, of Dan's Construction. He and dad remained the best of friends for many years. Dan built five or six homes on a street he developed in Cupertino, then sold empty lots, of which dad bought. Once again, he pitched his tent and began to build a garage-type building, affectionately known as "the bunkhouse."

When the house in Prescott finally sold and the bunkhouse was built, dad sent for mom to come to California. Over the course of one year, between 1946 and 1947, mom and dad built the family's first home in Cupertino. They were very resourceful, using wood and windows from old barracks near Yuba City, amongst other materials, to construct the house.

In 1954, dad began building homes, then bidding on churches, schools and shopping centers, building them all successfully. During that same year, Merle Alexa, my sister, was born in San Jose. Tragically, she would die nine months later, with dad unable to even visit his daughter.

In those days, services to help struggling families such as Medicare or welfare did not exist. Cousins helped by giving us food, and nuns would bring us clothing and canned fruit. Kellogg Corn Flakes probably represented the most depressing food item, as expired boxes designated to be added to chicken feed found their way onto our kitchen table.

