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心灵鸡汤

(31)

A **5th**
Portion
of

第五辑

Chicken
Soup
for the Soul

Jack Canfield
Mark Victor Hansen

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2006

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A 5TH PORTION OF
CHICKEN SOUP
FOR THE SOUL®

Jack Canfield
Mark Victor Hansen
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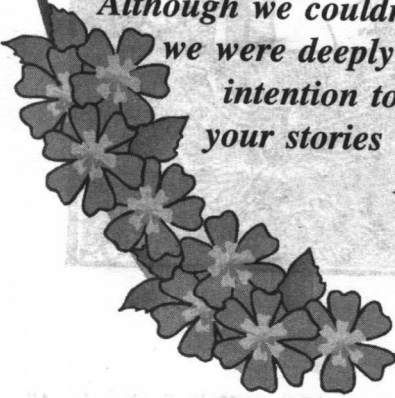
*We tell ourselves stories
in order to live.*

Joan Didion

*With love and appreciation we dedicate
this book to the more than 20 million people who
have purchased, read and shared the fourteen
Chicken Soup for the Soul books with their families,
friends, business partners, employees, students and
congregations, and to the over five thousand readers
who have sent us stories, poems, cartoons and
quotes for possible inclusion in*

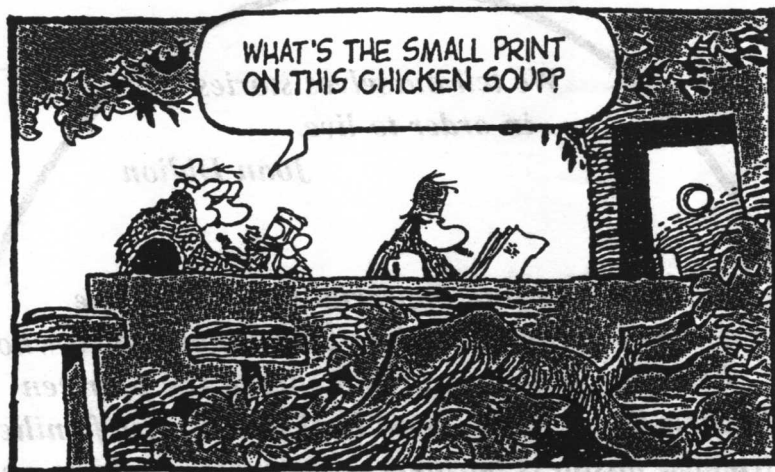
*A 5th Portion of Chicken Soup for the Soul.
Although we couldn't use everything you sent in,
we were deeply touched by your heartfelt
intention to share yourselves and
your stories with us and our readers.*

Love to you!



SHOE

JEFF MACNELLY



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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Without the stories we are nothing.

Bryce Courtney

From our hearts to yours, we are delighted to offer you *A 5th Portion of Chicken Soup for the Soul*. This book contains 101 more stories that we know will inspire and motivate you to love more fully and unconditionally, live with more passion and compassion, and pursue your heartfelt dreams with more conviction, action and perseverance. We believe that this book will sustain you in times of challenge, frustration and failure, and comfort you in times of confusion, pain and loss. We hope it will truly become a lifelong companion, offering continual insight and wisdom in many areas of your life.

How to Read This Book

We have been blessed with readers from all over the world who have given us feedback. Some read our books from cover to cover; others pick out a particular chapter that interests them. Some simply can't put our books down from beginning to end,



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going through a big box of tissues en route. We've been particularly touched by those readers who have reconnected to loved ones or old friends as a result of being inspired by one of the stories.

Many times we have been approached by readers—at a speech or public appearance—who told us how one or more stories were of inestimable value during a period of trial and testing, such as the death of a loved one or a serious illness. We are grateful for having had the opportunity to be of help to so many in this way. Some have told us they keep their *Chicken Soup* book at bedside, reading one story each night, often rereading favorites. Many use these books as a family gathering experience, reading a story aloud with parents and children gathered together in the evening.

You may choose the path of readers who have gone before you, or simply enjoy reading this book with no particular pattern in mind, letting each story guide your thoughts in new directions. Find the path that's best for you, and most of all, enjoy!



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1

ON LOVE

The greatest disease is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread, but there are many more dying for a little love.

Mother Teresa





The Seed Jar

Look around for a place to sow a few seeds.

Henry Van Dyke

ON LOVE

Being the youngest of four girls, I usually saw to Grandma Lou's needs at family gatherings. Lucinda Mae Hamish—Grandma Lou for short—was a tall twig of a woman, with a long gray braid and sharp features. She was the undisputed Master Gardener in our family, for she had come of age in the Depression, where she learned to use every old thing twice. And when it was worn out, she'd use it again—in her garden.

When Grandma Lou visited, she brought packets of her own seeds, folded in scraps of envelopes and labeled with instructions. Her handwriting was precise and square. She gave each of us a particular plant; usually tomatoes and carrots and marigolds for my sisters—foolproof sorts of seeds, for my sisters were impatient and neglectful gardeners. But for me, she saved the more fragile varieties.

At the time of my next oldest sister's wedding, Grandma Lou was eighty-four and living alone, still weeding her large beds herself. And as she had for my older sisters' weddings, Grandma Lou gave Jenny a Mason jar layered with seeds from her garden.

Round and round the colorful spiral of seeds curled in the fat-mouthed jar. Heavy beans in rich, deep earth tones held the





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bottom steady. Next came corn kernels, polished in cheesecloth until they gleamed like gold. Flat seeds of cucumber, squash and watermelon filled the upper reaches, interspersed with the feathery dots of marigolds. At the very top, separated with cheesecloth, were the finer herb seeds of mint and basil. The jar was crowned with a gleaming brass lid and a cheerful ribbon. There was a lifetime supply of seeds pressed into the jar; a whole garden's worth of food for the new couple.

Two years later, Grandma Lou suffered a stroke, which forced her into an assisted-living apartment. And though she was unable to attend my own wedding that year, I was delighted to see a Mason jar among the brightly wrapped gifts at my reception.

But unlike its predecessors, my jar held no graceful pattern of seeds. Instead, it was a haphazard blend, as if all the seeds had been dumped into a pillowcase and then poured into the jar. Even the lid seemed like an afterthought, for it was rusty and well used. But considering Grandma Lou's state of health, I felt blessed that she remembered the gentle tradition at all.

My groom, Mark, found work in the city, and we moved into a small apartment. A garden was all but impossible, so I consoled myself by placing the seed jar in our living room. There it stood as a promise to return to the garden.

Grandma Lou died the year our twins were born. By the time our sons were toddlers, I had moved the seed jar to the top of the refrigerator, where their curious little hands couldn't tip over my treasure.

Eventually we moved to a house, but there still wasn't enough sun in our yard to plant a proper garden. Struggling yet courageous fescue grass vied for what little space there was between the dandelions, and it was all I could do to keep it mowed and occasionally watered.

The boys grew up overnight, much like the weeds I contin-



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uously pulled. Soon they were out on their own, and Mark was looking at retirement. We spent our quiet evenings planning for a little place in the country, where Mark could fish and I could have a proper garden.

A year later, Mark was hit by a drunk driver, paralyzing him from the neck down. Our savings went to physical therapy, and Mark gained some weak mobility in his arms and hands. But the simple day-to-day necessities still required a nurse.

Between the hospital visits and the financial worries, I was exhausted. Soon Mark would be released to my care, and at half his size, I knew I wouldn't even be able to lift him into our bed. I didn't know what I would do. We couldn't afford a day nurse, let alone full-time help, and assisted-care apartments were way out of our range.

Left to myself, I was so tired I wouldn't even bother to eat. But Jenny, my sister who lived nearby, visited me daily, forcing me to take a few bites of this or that. One night she arrived with a pan of lasagna, and she chatted cheerfully as we set our places. When she asked about Mark, I broke down in tears, explaining how he'd be home soon and how tight our money was running. She offered her own modest savings—even offered to move in and help take care of him—but I knew Mark's pride wouldn't allow it.

I stared down at my plate, my appetite all but gone. In the quiet that fell between us, despair settled down to dinner like an old friend. Finally I pulled myself together and asked her to help me with the dishes. Jenny nodded and rose to put the leftover lasagna away. As the refrigerator door flopped to a close, the seed jar on top rattled against the wall. Jenny turned at the sound. "What's this?" she asked, and reached for the jar.

Looking up from the sink, I said, "Oh, that's just Grandma Lou's seed jar. We each got one for a wedding present, remember?" Jenny looked at me, then studied the jar.





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“You mean you never opened it?” she asked.

“Never had a patch of soil good enough for a garden, I guess.”

Jenny tucked the jar in one arm and grabbed my sudsy hand in her other. “Come on!” she said excitedly.

Half dragging me, she went back to the dinner table. It took three tries, but she finally got the lid loose and overturned the jar upon the table. Seeds went bouncing everywhere! “What are you doing?!” I cried, scrambling to catch them. A pile of faded brown and tan seeds slid out around an old, yellow envelope. Jenny plucked it from the pile and handed it to me.

“Open it,” she said, with a smile. Inside I found five stock certificates, each for one hundred shares. Reading the company names, our eyes widened in recognition. “Do you have any idea what these are worth by now?” she asked.

I gathered a handful of seeds to my lips and said a silent prayer of thanks to Grandma Lou. She had been tending a garden for me all these years and had pressed a lifetime supply of love into that old Mason jar.

Dee Berry