

“If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;”—Emily Dickinson

My Heart's Dulcet Voice

by

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Sometimes, when we don't get what we want, we get a chance to give the world what it really needs, although it may not seem that way while we're hurting. I was at a very painful juncture in my life: suffocating in a career for which I no longer felt passion (TV production); attempting the one I'd always dreamed about (writing); recovering from a blindsiding loss (miscarriage). My wounded heart and fractured mind ached for space, so I gifted myself with a retreat at a meditative center in upstate New York, a mystical place, whose Native American grounds have been nourished by many soul seekers.

Beneath the protective arms of a silver maple, I sat beside a motionless pond, closed my eyes, took some delicious breaths, and asked my heart, “Show me the way.” I wrote the same request over and over in my journal, and then without break or hesitation wrote, “Teach children to listen to their intuition. Teach them to follow their hearts.”

What?

“Finish your novel”, “adopt a child”, or even, “become a back-up singer” would have seemed more appropriate. (I've secretly fantasized about being a raspy alto who stands next to a mega talent like Prince or Lady Gaga blasting out perfectly pitched “oohs” and “ahhs”.)

I repeated my heart's directive out loud, which surprisingly elicited a sense of calm throughout my body. Something about this response, in the gentle and spontaneous way it had come forth, filled me with hope.

Not permitting another second of serenity, my mind squawked in protest, "Who are *you* to teach children about intuition? Who are you to teach anyone about *anything*?"

My mind's discordant voice stung like a slap. It is my usual habit to give in to this inner bully. But now, while inhaling the first blush of spring and feeling safe in this sacred space, I felt like I could make a different choice. I read the simple directive and felt peacefully confident, inadvertently having found a tool to stave off my voice of fear.

So that I could access this grounded feeling once the retreat ended, I wrote my heart's reply on an index card and carried it everywhere, like a prayer card. I had been given a mission, but had no idea why, so I began a practice of getting still every day and repeating the sentences out loud. The next guidance I received was to do research.

I discovered there were numerous books written for adults to help children access their intuition, but none directly written *for* children so they could personally learn how to experience the connection. "I may not be a teacher," I said out loud, hoping to assuage the voice of my belligerent mind, "but I am a writer." The joyous spark of intuitive connection lit me up like a firecracker--"I could write a children's book about a little girl who learns to connect with and follow her heart!"

"Are you kidding?" barked my mind. "You don't know how to write a children's book! Forget it!"

It is astounding how different these two voices could make me feel—one filled me with peace, joy, and possibility, the other, like I was useless.

I pulled out my index card as if to say, “See? My heart knows better. It speaks to me kindly. Not like you!” Getting still with the sentences, which by now had become a practice I completely trusted, brought me back to clarity, and I managed to avert my mind’s latest sabotage attempt. I added the new “write a children’s book” directive on to the card, further unfolding my mission.

But there was truth in my mind’s challenge that I could not ignore. I had only written for the adult market, never for children. It seemed crazy to proceed with something I knew nothing about, but that trusting feeling in my heart made me feel worthy; I just needed help. Before I could talk myself out of it, I enrolled in a children’s book writing class.

By way of collaborative support, focused discipline, and constant connection with my simple but powerful card, I birthed the first draft of *Genevieve’s Gift: A Child’s Joyful Tale of Connecting with her Intuitive Heart*. After months of revising, and developing a workshop that included drawing, singing, and visualizations designed to help children connect with their intuition, I brought the manuscript and workshop to schools and libraries to attain real feedback from real kids (children are the best and toughest critics!). After even more editing, I was finally ready to submit to publishers.

I could have wallpapered the bathroom with the amount of rejection letters I received. “Told you so!” my mind teased and tugged like a Jack Russell on a pant leg. “If it was any good, a publisher would want it!”

Doubt crept through me like a slow choking vine. Maybe this vicious mental voice was right after all. I stopped conducting workshops, tore up my index card, and spent a colossal amount of time feeling sorry for myself. My mind soaked up this negativity and spoon-fed it back, “You have wasted so much time.” I agreed.

Until one day a writer friend set me straight.

“Just self-publish it,” she said.

“No way!” I snapped.

“You can wait forever, or you can put your words out there where they belong.”

She was right. My journey, which had begun with two simple sentences revealed on retreat, had brought me to this precise moment of surrender.

I self-published *Genevieve’s Gift*, which amazingly received wonderful recognition and won multiple awards, including a Gold Mom’s Choice Award. I began doing workshops with the actual book, having terrific fun with the children. I felt fabulous, like I had accomplished something worthwhile, until a colleague said, “Well, if a real publisher picks you up, I guess then you will have *real success*.” She voiced what my mind was still festering—a desperate need for validation to materialize in a very specific way. Occur

Thankfully, a five-year old girl with special needs changed the meaning of real success forever. Achingly shy, she had never been able to speak in front of her class. But during a workshop exercise where everyone connects with their heart and draws its special message, she whispered to her teacher that she wanted to be like *Genevieve*, who in the story has to overcome fear to face her friends. Steadily holding her teacher’s hand, she bravely walked forward and shared her drawing: a radiant sun with beams bursting out. The beautiful light that had been hidden inside this glorious, happy child was now palpable. Excitement pulsed in my heart and tears graced my face, as I looked upon Spirit’s mastery.

Watching that little girl choose her heart over her fear, just like I had to, made me understand that how my words get out into the world is far less important than their true

mission, which may be to heal, inspire, or soothe in ways I never imagined. I was blessed to witness this up close, but often, we don't get that opportunity because truthfully, it's not for us to see. It's for Spirit to guide us, like an inner mentor, through the dulcet voice of our intuitive hearts. We just have to listen closely and trust that something purposeful is making its way through us.
