***A SINGLE WOMAN’S HANDBOOK***

*(Making it as a Single Parent)*

****

*INTRODUCTION*

Looking back over my life in retrospect, with the awareness that I have changed my fate through faith, I realized too that my potential was created in my imagination and manifested within my daydreams.

To begin, I am the youngest of three girls, 3 years apart in age. My sister Cathy and I were raised in abject poverty and despair by our grandmother, who favored and adored our oldest sister Elizabeth. She was showered with luxuries, human kindness and considerations that were withheld and denied from Cathy and me. In reflecting over those years, and the rationale of my childhood, I can only surmise that it was because of my grandmother’s personal frustrations in life, coupled with her suppressed anger and unspoken distress at her husband for his infidelity, and at her daughter for her promiscuity in having mothered her husband’s children – was the only reason that I could think would justify her despair.   
  
When at the age of three my father died, forcing my grandmother to raise us as her own, since my biological mother (her daughter) signed my grandmother’s name on our birth certificates, as she didn’t want us. It was probably out of that narrative that my grandmother and mother crated the environment that cultivated and nurtured the anger, hostility, hatred and bitterness toward Cathy and me. It also could easily explain what was responsible for the hostility and lack of love in the climate in which we were raised.

A youngster, I was a victim of neglect by my mother and grandmother, and suffered extreme mental and physical torture and abuse by both of my two older sisters; particularly my eldest sister Elizabeth. She was always protected by my grandmother, and was never scolded for her meanness towards me; and throughout my life at home, her wickedness went unpunished. While all (5) five of us lived under the same roof, until Elizabeth left home to get married, at 19 years old, she never spoke a kind word to me during our childhood, and her only communication was to do or say something offensive or cruel.

Not having anyone to monitor my school work from the beginning of first grade and on, I consequently became an under-achiever and failure. ( See AWC . Table of Contents, Section No.18 entitled: The Journey of a Mile . Image and disAbilities . The Gift) I was repeatedly reminded of my inadequacies in not fitting in. Because of my inability to communicate with any confidence, I was told by my teachers that I was an under-achiever and would never amount to anything. Consequently, by society’s standards I was a failure.

By the time I was 16 years old, I was a functioning illiterate and suffered with academic and social learning disabilities that caused me to shut down and withdraw from interacting with people. I quit school under the strain of academia, but returned to night school the following semester to complete my education and get my diploma; having discovered there were no jobs available for high school drop-outs.

In my early twenties I met a man 14 years my senior, and to escape the entrapment of my misery, three months later I became his bride. Unknown to me at the time that the man I had married was an active alcoholic. My marriage began to deteriorate from the beginning and grew progressively worse over the years that followed. In October of 1973, my husband abandoned me and the children, and deserted household for the last time, but not before I suffered severe mental and physical trauma under the strain and abuse of being a battered wife in a domestic violence situation. By this time however, I had two beautiful children, aged 4 and 5 years old.

In the winter of 1973, after my marriage broke-up and my grandmother refused to give me refuge and allow me to come home with my young children until I could get myself together, and again being forced to survive alone the hardships and adversities that life had in store for me. Having just been released on bail from Riker’s Island, charged with the attempted murder of my husband’s lover, the children and I evicted from the apartment where we lived. I had no family, no friends, and no-where to go. I was unemployed, and unskilled and forced to go on public assistance, and move into a 1 ½ room rat and roach invested welfare tenement with my children. I vowed then that I would not pass-on the trauma and repercussions of poverty to my children. I made a commitment “that the buck would stop here, and it would begin with me”. I was determined not to be party to a second generation failing because of life’s circumstances or society’s indifference.

*Book III . Introduction . Coming Soon …*