

# **ALL THE LIGHT INSIDE OF YOU**

**One woman's quest  
for spiritual understanding  
and the gift discovered  
for all who choose it.**

**A TRUE STORY**

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## **Dedication**

This book is for all the people who want to forge a brighter today in a world of diminishing light.

## CHAPTER 3

# The Light of a Tattered Man's Soul

*What fuels your spirit fuels your body. The power that fuels our bodies, our minds, and our hearts does not originate in our DNA. Rather, it has roots in Divinity itself. The truth is as simple and as eternal as that.*

*Caroline Myss, Ph.D., The Anatomy of the Spirit*

1983 | Age 16

30 years away from identifying God in my life

My family moved from my hometown in upstate New York to a small town in Arizona as I was entering my senior year of high school. I traded in the lush green of the Catskill Mountains for the tan and beige of the desert landscape; the constant chill in the air for the dry heat of the unrelenting sun. Instead of deer darting across the road, we slammed on our brakes for giant tumbleweeds. It was as if I were stepping onto a different movie set depicting a vastly different scene. I missed my friends back home terribly, but thankfully I made new ones easily and I was happy to get my first job working at a privately-owned fast food restaurant that was similar to the long-standing KFC.

As I made my way home at the end of each work day, I would drive beneath a particular interstate overpass, and now and then, would see someone sleeping beneath it. Back then, we called them hobos. In old black and white movies, hobos are depicted as jolly, sometimes wearing funny hats, dancing and yucking it up as they drink. In reality, they live a near-joyless, often frightening, and primal existence. There is nothing jolly about homelessness.

Most people have no good idea what to do when they come upon a homeless person. For a moment, they may contemplate giving them money to buy food, but then immediately think, “What if they use it to buy cigarettes or liquor? What if I approach them and they’re dangerous?”

There was no room for these concerns as long as my inner voice was guiding me. “He’s hungry. He has not eaten in days. Give him something to eat. You are safe,” the voice inside would say. By this time in my young life, I had become completely obedient to the voice within.

The restaurant owner was also my boss. I cannot say for certain, but I have a strong hunch that he started the restaurant as a hobby for himself, and to keep high school kids out of trouble after school. He was affluent, very good-hearted, and he put great effort into creating a pleasant working environment for his staff. One of the small perks of working for him was that he permitted his employees to put meals on a tab that would then come out of our paychecks. That was a big deal for a young, poor high school teenager just starting out. Also, it was convenient on the occasion that I would bring a homeless person in to his restaurant for a much-needed hot meal. The overpass was close to work, so it was easy for me to find and transport these homeless men (they were always men back then)

to the restaurant for a heaping plate of chicken and vegetables. I would put the meal on my tab and have my boss calculate it from my paycheck.

My boss was not too happy when I came with these men. Not because he worried how the other patrons might feel about a homeless person in their midst. No, this good man had a beautiful heart—so beautiful that he never once deducted these meals from my paycheck. His disapproval came in the form of fatherly concern that one day I might get hurt—or worse, killed.

This next story was the catalyst for the start of my quest to understand who we all are as human beings at our innermost core, what is most special, yet often unacknowledged and never seen — the spirit that sustains us all when everything else falls away.



One evening I brought a homeless man to the restaurant for a meal. He was so withdrawn that I could hardly extract one word from him. This was unusual, as those before him seemed to crave conversation and company, almost desperate for someone to call them by name. After several futile attempts to draw his attention away from the silent consumption of his meal, I stopped trying. I was very young, and I didn't understand the delicacy of delivering kindness without stripping dignity. What grown man wanted to look at the face of a teenager who had the means to provide him such a basic necessity in life as food, emphasizing that he himself could not? Although he decided to get in my car earlier, once we were at the restaurant, he made it clear that he preferred to be invisible.

Eventually I stopped trying to talk to him and I studied him discreetly from across the table. Young teenage girls were masters at not letting someone know they were checking him or her out.

He looked ancient to my sixteen-year-old eyes. I would guess he was probably early 50s. He was Caucasian with a gray beard and was wearing a knit cap. His clothing was tattered, but he didn't smell of street living like many of the others. He might have been experiencing homelessness, but there were visible signs reflecting his efforts to keep himself groomed, to perhaps hang on to as much of his dignity as possible. He wore knit gloves that ended at the knuckles. His fingers were chapped and his fingernails long, but not dirty. The entire time he ate his meal, he kept his head bent down toward his food, never once looking up at me.

The other patrons in the restaurant would glance over at us periodically, watching us out of curiosity, which was not unusual. Some faces reflected sympathy while others, disapproval. *Too bad, people, this is not your business*, I thought. But their "looks" added to the discomfort I felt from his silence.

I had learned nothing about this person, not even his name. I sat there as unobtrusively as possible without actually getting up to leave the table to give him the space he seemed to want. At that time, it didn't cross my mind that he was probably infinitely more uncomfortable than I was. Hindsight is a teacher that allows you to correct your choices and actions in future scenarios.

All of a sudden, he took his focus off his meal. Without even glancing in my direction, he reached into his duffel bag on the floor at his feet, and began rummaging through it until he found what he was looking for. He removed a small cloth sack

tied at the top that looked like a bag of coins in a cartoon movie. He put the little bag on the table. I can still to this day see in my mind his partially gloved hands untying and opening it to reveal something wrapped in tissue paper. He carefully unwrapped the tissue paper to reveal even more tissue, unwrapping and unwrapping. *Whatever it is, he has it well protected. Must be important to him.*

When he finally reached the nucleus of this little package, he placed the object on the table, put his semi-gloved finger on top of it and slid it across to me. He slowly pulled his weathered hand away, revealing a small heart-shaped pendant with diamonds and emeralds.

I glanced at him, making eye contact and asked, "May I?" He nodded, and I reached for the small treasure. It was lovely. Finally! Something to talk about. But he had already returned to focusing on his meal in continued silence. Undeterred, I put the pendant in the palm of my hand and studied it. "It's really beautiful. Does it belong to someone special?" No answer. I tried again, "Did someone give this to you?" More silence. Any remaining hope I had of talking with this man faded. I placed his treasured pendant back on the table and slid it across to him as I thanked him for showing it to me.

Without a single word, he slid the beautiful bejeweled heart back over to me again and the inner guide spoke up. "He wants you to have it."

*No! I couldn't!* I looked at him in complete disbelief, and with hesitation asked, "Are you giving this to me?" He responded with one silent nod of his head.

"I can't keep this. It's too much. It's too special. I could never take this from you," I said, tripping over my words.



Again, my inner guide spoke, telling me, “Accept it. He wants you to have it.”

He remained silent, but there was kindness reflected in his eyes.

I insisted that it was way too big a gift in exchange for the food I’d purchased, and my heart felt overwhelmed with a sensation I couldn’t identify. He lifted his head to gesture with his facial expression that he wanted me to keep it. I finally stopped protesting and just stared in wonder at the treasure that was now mine. “Thank you. It will be my honor to have this,” I told him, feeling awe and completely humbled by his thoughtfulness and generosity. He simply lowered his head slowly, returning his focus to his plate. Once again, I stared at the top of his knit cap.

My inner voice pressed on, “You have just witnessed a part of this man’s spirit that has not been impacted by the difficult circumstances he finds himself in. Only love could touch this sacred part of his being.” I knew with certainty this was a very pivotal moment in my young life and I was moved beyond words. I could barely hear myself get what I wanted to say out to the quiet man across the table from me. “I promise you I will keep this for the rest of my life, and I will think of you every time I wear it.” He looked up and held my gaze for just a moment, his first real eye contact with me. I felt my eyes fill with tears and experienced a sudden rush of emotions. I somehow knew that I had just connected, in a different way, to the familiar presence of my angels.

Interesting thing is, at this point God was not anywhere on my radar. All I thought I knew about God back then was that He was great, and He was good, and we should thank Him for our food.

When I look back on this event now I can't help but think, if only I had been more aware of God, I would have known the Source of that which was pressing on my heart and the Source of the powerful, benevolent energy moving through this man that early evening in my youth. I would have had an even deeper understanding of the spark of divinity that lives inside each of us; the light of God we all possess that shone so brightly between this tattered man and my sixteen-year-old self. I did not understand then that this man and I, through our interactions that evening, were essentially both unknowingly obeying the commands of the very same God —the Source of perfect love.

If I had known God back then, I would have known that what I felt that night was God's exquisite, unconditional, constant, and unwavering love as my homeless friend reached across the table to give me what was probably the most valuable of all his remaining worldly possessions. And I would have known that the awesome wave of emotion I experienced, the overwhelming feeling of pure love, is what happens when the Holy Spirit, the action part of the eternal Being of Love, swells inside and overtakes the command center of your body. When this happens, unless you have enormous control, you cannot help it, you will cry.

I did not know any of this yet, but the day would eventually come when I would. If that knowledge was to be delivered to me at that time, I missed it. This would prove not to be the first and certainly not the last time I would miss a beacon from this Divine Source.

What I did know then was I wanted to discover what exactly it is that can protect someone's spirit so completely that it becomes impervious to the brutal beating life can deliver. What

is the source of this inner-warrior that shields? What exactly had I just experienced?

This beautiful man did indeed have a voice, and as I reluctantly returned him to his desolate spot beneath the overpass that night, he used it to say, “Thank you, Miss. God Bless you.”

I never learned his name, yet to this day, he is one of the most influential people I have ever met in my life. Because of him I began my quest to understand the source of hope that ultimately resides inside all of us. It would be the start of learning about something so powerful it would eventually mold me into the person I am today.

It would be the first step on a path that would lead to the understanding that I too possess an inner-warrior for my light.



*At a speaking engagement in 2016, sharing the story and wearing the pendant.  
Photo Credit: Jim Harrison Photography*