

PART ONE

Faith

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God Handed Me a Gift

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How many times do I have to have cancer?! I stood in the center of my living room with the phone receiver still dangling in my hand and raged against God at the total unfairness and tragedy of my life. I'd just received two phone calls within minutes of each other. The first coldly informed me that, after years of international courtroom battles with my first husband, I'd lost custody of my three beloved boys. The second call, almost as cold, was from my doctor informing me that my breast cancer had returned.

What were my options? I had no money to continue fighting for custody. I didn't even have the money to go and see them. I saw no reason for a future, and I was in so much pain that I could no longer stand to be inside my own body. Suicide was an option. I realized in a moment of truth, though, that threatening suicide was yet another attempt to manipulate God to my own ends. My ego admitted defeat, and I got down on my knees in my living room and admitted that I wanted to live. I also admitted that I did not know how to live, that all my attempts at living life had ended in tragedy, pain, and illness. I let go of my life and asked God to show me how to live.

Without knowing exactly where I was going or why, I got into my car and began to drive aimlessly in a haze of fear and suffering. Fully alive to the realities of my life for perhaps the first time, I spotted a fortune-teller's sign and turned into the driveway. When this woman answered the door, she took one look at my face and said, "I don't know what has happened to you, but this will all turn around for you in the next few years." I hung on to her words as I headed back to the car and continued my aimless journey.

I ended up at the public library in my town, a spot I'd never before visited. As I wandered along the shelves, my eyes too glazed to pick out the titles of the books in front of me, the librarian approached me. In her hands she held a book—*Love, Medicine, and Miracles* by Bernie Siegel, M.D. She said, "Have you read this book?" I shook my head, no, I hadn't, and took the book she handed to me. However had she known that was what I needed at that moment? It was an amazing beginning to a journey of healing.

I wept as I read the book at home. Here were the answers I'd been seeking, and I knew this was the response to my prayers. God had handed me a great gift, he had answered me. The humility and gratitude were a welcome relief, a balm to my soul. It was a joy to look to God for help now instead of having to bluff my way through life, pretending to know it all. In the next few weeks, with the help of God, I began to take charge of my life and my health. My scheduled biopsy was three weeks away, and I planned to make real changes to myself before then.

I began rising at dawn and watching the first pink rays of sunlight sweeping the sky. I reached inside and thanked God for each new day, releasing tears of gratitude, which were followed by an immense rush of energy that was none other than the healing energy of hope. I'd take bike rides, fully alive to the moment like a child. After riding I would sit on my couch and practice the meditation and visualization exercises that Bernie had recommended in his book.

To my amazement one day, a visualization came forth from within myself of little birds eating golden crumbs; the little birds were the immune system cells and the crumbs were the cancer cells. I visualized the cancer in the form of golden crumbs, buttery

and rich. I would follow this visualization by imagining a white light coming down through the top of my head, flowing throughout my entire body and healing me.

One morning after almost three weeks of biking and meditating, I sat down on the couch to begin my routine. As I began my visualization of the little white birds, something different happened. All of a sudden I felt the white light flow through the top of my head with tremendous force and energy. I can remember the exact experience—it was the experience of my duality as a human being. My heart pounded wildly as this tremendous heat and energy entered me. My rational mind was saying, “Get up! You are having a heart attack!” I ignored it calmly, not thinking of anything but simply letting myself go to the experience. I chose to let go and allow my being to become one with that beautiful light, that powerful energy.

Moments later I lay slumped on the couch. What a feeling—for the first time in my life my mind was free of all thought. For the first time in my life I experienced a deep, silent peace. It was like a smile in my heart. I knew, I just knew, that something wonderful had happened.

When my husband returned home that day, I told him what had happened and then shared with him my secret belief—that if another mammogram was taken, it would be clear. “They won’t find anything there,” I told him confidently.

I kept my doctor’s appointment later that week. Before we began, my doctor came in with the previous mammogram in his hand, placing it on the light board so that I could see the cancerous dark shadow that lurked within. I said nothing about my healing experience to him, but I expressed no fear at the sight of the film. I was in a state of balance with myself, and I knew how it would turn out. The doctor left, I undressed, and the technician took a mammogram. I dressed again and waited for the doctor to come back and discuss the new pictures. But it was the technician who returned: “The doctor wants just one more mammogram.”

Actually, the doctor wanted eight mammograms that day, before finally acknowledging what I already knew deep inside—that the cancer was gone. He was happy and excited for me, but mystified.

I told him about the little birds and the golden crumbs. I told him about the powerful white light. He looked into my eyes, took both my hands in his, and said with true sincerity, “Call it little birds, or call it what you will, but you are a very lucky woman.”

BERNIE’S REFLECTION

*Everything in the universe is subject to change, and
everything is on schedule.*

I would say Angela is not a lucky woman, she is an exceptional woman. Why call it luck? Why not give her the credit and learn from what she did and share her story with other patients? Between a painful custody battle and a life-threatening illness recurring, she saw very little in her life worth living for. It is only natural to feel this way. It was truly a miracle that Angela was able to find inspiration at the lowest point in her life. Rather than choose to lose her physical life, she chose to eliminate the life that was killing her, and in so doing she literally saved her own life. I always encourage people to never give up or forget the blessings that life still has to offer. To spend time thinking about what you are grateful for each day can help you survive. Your body needs to receive a “live” message so it, too, will fight for your life. We are capable of making genetic changes, as are bacteria, viruses, and plants when they are affected by antibiotics, vaccines, and droughts, and are still able to survive. Of course, it is easier for them to choose life because they do not have all the stress and problems people have.

Angela was more than lucky to achieve her outcome and survival. She did something powerful that made a difference in her healing. She accepted herself, her divine origin, and the power of inner peace to heal her life. She chose life rather than death despite cancer and divorce. As a result, her disease was cured as well. The doctor would have learned something powerful if he had asked Angela to tell her story so he could pass it on to other patients as a source of encouragement and hope.

After reading *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*, Angela began the journey of healing her body by healing her mind. The book may have inspired her, but she did the work that made the difference. We can coach others, but they need to show up for practice and rehearsals, or the best coaching in the world is ineffective. With her strong, positive attitude and faith in God, she found an exercise that helped to change her life. Angela's image of the birds feeding on the cancer gave her the reassurance she needed to know that everything was going to be all right. This peaceful image was not about killing the enemy and fighting a war, but about nourishment and healing.

I suggest you find a visual image that feels comfortable for you and provides you with hope and empowerment. I know a woman who had no results when she saw her white cells as vicious dogs eating her tumor, but when the tumor became a block of ice in her visualization, God's light melted it away.

Remember to live each day to the fullest, and like Angela did, take pleasure in simple activities that most people take for granted. When you listen to your inner self, all will be made clear to you.