



Having a Voice

Let your voice sing out, starting from deep in your soul, spreading throughout your life, into the world, as far as the stars and beyond.

I stopped singing for the second or third time when I got too busy with the rest of my life. Busy with work and home and the fun of love, and then moving my mother, and then enjoying my son's wedding and then a grandchild...a wonderful, intriguing, fascinating grandchild. And it was somewhere along in there that I finally, *finally* got it: if I don't make time to sing, I will *always* be busy with *something* else.

But before I got it, I had first started noticing that I was out of balance. So much of my life brought me delight, but not enough to *fill* me. Part of *me* in my life was missing. I could easily be distracted from my focus on The Missing Me by a holiday preparation, a dinner to fix, a baby to hold...that precious, precious grandchild that I love, love, love to hold. When I looked up, I realized that in the middle of my life, I had truly lost my voice. The Less than Me who remained was still doing fine, but with less joy and more irritation. Less passion and more drudgery. I had allowed the full joy, the full passion of being alive, *my voice*, to slip away so easily over time. A day here went, and a day there, and soon one year and another year and another. I was shocked to look back and see it. And even when I did see it, I still wasn't certain how to make a change. I felt lost. Then one day someone told me that if I would start singing again, my knees would feel better. Did that make sense? It did to me. At the thought of using my voice, I could feel the surge of energy throughout my body and the itch to get going. Joy, passion. Stirring. The *beginning* of having a voice...again.

The joy of that thought would last a little while, and then I would return to the busyness or frustration...or fear...and again I wouldn't know how to proceed. But I did not put the thought away totally ever again. I

wrestled with the hows and whens and what ways and was bogged down in the wrestling. And then I saw that my job was none of that. My job was staying focused on the vision. I want to use my voice. To sing. To speak. To write. I have things to say.

I am still in this process at this very moment that I write. I am imagining that whenever I am complete with this particular round of having a voice, I will move on to another round. *That* is the energy of being alive. *That* is what makes me a woman to know. A wife to love with. A mother to sit with. A grandmother to giggle with. I have a voice. I am determined to let it sing. It has indeed started deep in my soul, and slowly, slowly once again it is spreading throughout my life. I expect it to go into the world in its own way...and as far as the stars...and beyond.
Amen.

Dale Midgette Smith

From THE RHYTHM OF MY DAYS: MUSINGS AFTER 60

