

❧ S. RENEE SMITH ❧

VICTORIOUS WOMAN OF THE MONTH

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S. Renee Smith felt as though she had “the Midas touch.” She had a long history of personal and professional development. When she focused on a goal and did the work, she knew how to overcome her obstacles and achieve success. Whether it was college, modeling, television, or corporate work, getting what she wanted was almost second nature for Renee...until the spring of 2001. That’s when Renee’s life went into a tailspin. Within a few months, it changed from involved and creative to stressed, confused and unproductive.

In hindsight, Renee might have seen it coming. Renee was engaged at the end of 2000, but she and her new fiancé were in counseling and the engagement was unsettled. At work, though she thought she was doing a good job as a director of public relations, she felt her supervisor treated her unfairly.

Then, in April, her fiancé walked out of her life. Their “counseling was a prerequisite” for Renee, and he didn’t want to continue with it. When he left, it was with no notice and no explanation. He was just gone.

A month later, she was diagnosed with clinical depression. She took a couple weeks off from work. When she returned, she learned that her current contract would not be renewed.

Renee was in shock. For years and years, she felt in control of her life and career, and suddenly, Renee said, “*nothing* worked.” In just a few months time, she was alone and jobless. In stunned silence, she wondered, “how could this have happened *to me?*” For the first time in her life, Renee Smith confessed, “I felt like a failure.”

For a while, Renee mostly stayed at home, by herself. Though she didn’t want to think about what happened, it was in every thought. So she cried, she screamed, she sat in silence. She stopped thinking. Intuitively, Renee knew she needed to reconnect with herself – the real Renee who, somehow, had gotten lost. She tried in every way to find herself again...but found it difficult.

One afternoon, Renee’s father stopped over to her house. It was mid-afternoon when she answered the door in the pajamas and uncombed hair that had become her daily uniform. As her father walked through the door, he saw something was wrong. As her condition crept into his understanding, Renee saw the confused and disappointed look on his face. It startled her.

That afternoon was the beginning of a change, a positive one. “I’m a mess,” Renee told herself, “I’ve got to get myself together.” But, *what did that mean?* Once upon a time, she was a teenager who stood up to bullies, was active in church and school, dreamed big dreams and got excited about them. She hadn’t been that Renee for a long time. She wanted to be that person again. But...*how?* How would she start over now?

One of Renee’s many blessings came with the knowledge that her life had a positive destination. Yet, at the same time, she recognized she was having trouble assimilating into the journey. So she took stock of where she was. She started thinking

about who Renee Smith *really* was. She retraced the steps of her life and, as she did, she found places where her life veered from its original course. She came to a profound understanding. Looking back over her job and her relationship, Renee realized, “I released who I really was to my supervisor and my fiancé. I always lived life on my terms and then suddenly I trusted others to determine my direction. The real me kept getting buried. I had to earn Renee back.”

Over the next few weeks and months, Renee read spiritual and inspirational books. She started sorting through the negative experiences. She made the connection between some of her poor choices – like staying in a relationship that never completely felt right – and her depression. She prayed. She revisited her teenage dreams and reconnected with the young woman who was excited about life and the future – the one whose values weren’t compromised by money, power or celebrity. She encouraged her inner self to feel comfortable enough to come back. She repeated affirmations over and over again. About that challenging time, Renee remembered, “I understood it was a process. Although I got tired...I understood that I needed to be patient with myself.”

Gradually, Renee began to feel inspired again. Over the next few months, Renee made a conscious decision to get back to her roots and vowed to make wiser choices for her future. She took accountability for her past. She promised herself that her life would get better and do better.

It took some time, but Renee started to believe in herself once more. She shifted her direction and made choices that supported her life and her dreams. She trusted her instincts again and took consistent actions that led her back to herself.

Eventually, Renee revisited her life purpose to “help people achieve higher levels of self-empowerment...that result in a better quality of life” and resumed living her life in line with it. She started her own consulting and coaching business and today works with women to help them raise their self esteem and find their strongest voice. She also works with schools, colleges and corporations to help them retain good students and employees. Renee is also the author of *There is More Inside*.

After experiencing the most challenging part of her journey so far, what’s Renee’s advice to women? “Go within. When you trust yourself, you learn that you are trustworthy, a good decision-maker. So when challenges come, you trust the person who has led you to all the good treasures that you have had the opportunity to experience before. Listen to that internal nudge.”

Well Done, Renee!
You remind us that being down and out
doesn’t mean being done with life.
We can find our way up and into victory.
Thank You!

You can learn more about S. Renee Smith at her website
<http://www.thereismoreinside.com>