



Rhyme and Shine

Ruth Kuttler is nursing herself and others back to happiness...with her poetry

By Chris Kelley

Ruth Kuttler believes that when God closes a door, he opens another somewhere else.

The door that closed on Ruth was her 25-year career in nursing, which included 7 years of education, a post-graduate degree and certification as a family nurse practitioner—a top-level position in the nursing profession.

“From the very beginning, I knew I had made the wrong choice,” says Ruth, who lives and works in Naples, Florida. “Yet I kept trying to convince myself that more school, or another position would make it all more agreeable. It was like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Somehow I didn’t realize that no matter what I did, it wouldn’t be a good fit.”

Ruth’s low point came nine years ago when she was laid off from a nursing job she detested, yet desperately needed. She was practically the sole supporter for her daughter and her recently unemployed husband, who was also dealing with the consequences of an unstable job market.

“Every time I went through the motion of looking for a job in my field, I sunk lower and lower into a pit of deep depression,” Ruth says. “Few of my friends or family were sympathetic—they tried to convince me that happiness was not part of the equation.”

Ruth’s people all told her that the only thing that really mattered was making the mortgage payment and putting food on the table.

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Ruth’s low point came nine years ago when she was laid off from a nursing job she detested, yet desperately needed. She was practically the sole supporter for her daughter and her recently unemployed husband, who was also dealing with the consequences of an unstable job market. “Every time I went through the motion of looking for a job in my field, I sunk lower and lower into a pit of deep depression,” Ruth says. “Few of my friends or family were sympathetic—they tried to convince me that happiness was not part of the equation.” Ruth’s people all told her that the only thing that really mattered was making the mortgage payment and putting food on the table.

While Ruth was always careful with money, paid her bills on time and did what was expected of her, she found something very unsettling about accepting an unhappy, unfulfilling job. “I couldn’t believe that God wanted me to be miserable,” she says. “I wanted to pray for someone.” The first hint came one day while Ruth was looking through the newspaper for a job. Instead of advertisements, she stumbled upon a poetry column. “It was so exciting that I had never written poetry, or anything creative for my reader,” Ruth says. “I was, however, a talented writer and the recipient of many awards during college and graduate school for literary contributions.” Ruth thought she would share her feelings with a help for someone who she was not what she was put on this earth to do. “Once I picked up my pen, a stream of buried feelings effortlessly emerged on paper and to rhythmic poems,” she says. “One poem led to five and then ten more. Many days later, Ruth was still sitting at her kitchen table composing and printing whole stories and short plays.”

“Write and you will never know how to stop,” she says. “The accuracy of that suggestion was the divine timing of my life. For the first time ever, I gave myself permission to think about what I really wanted. I learned to listen to my inner voice and open up everything that didn’t fit me with passion. I made a choice for happiness and closed the chapter on a 25-year career in nursing forever.”

The first poem, titled “Giving You Where I Know” tells about the early days of her struggle. It begins:

A ray of sun emerges, delivering dawn’s new day.
 Pencil’s heavy stone to open white to my bed I lay.
 Thinking of you like I’ve known, the challenges I have faced,
 Success that I thought were mine were faded to haze.

Kuttler’s I’ve come to realize it takes multiple years to find
 Am all that’s left but empty dreams – a fact that’s hard to bear.
 Overcome loneliness to grant being proud

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future. She started asking herself questions about what she really wanted and what her real purpose was in life.

“I couldn’t believe that God wanted me to be miserable,” she says. “I started to pray for answers.”

The first hint came one Sunday while Ruth was looking through the newspaper for a job. Instead of employment, she stumbled upon a poetry contest.

“What was so amazing was that I had never written poetry, or anything creative for that matter,” Ruth says. “I was, however, a talented writer and the recipient of many awards during college and graduate school for literary contributions.”

Ruth thought that writing about her feelings might help her figure out who she was and what she was put on this earth to do. “Once I picked up my pen, a torrent of buried feelings effortlessly emerged on paper set to rhythmical patterns,” she says.

One poem led to five and then ten more. Many days later, Ruth was still sitting at her kitchen table cranking out poems while dishes and dust piled up.

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“Words and passion flowed from my keyboard as if God had gifted them to me,” she says. “The ecstasy of that inspired moment was the divine opening of my door. For the first time ever, I gave myself permission to think about what I really wanted. I learned to listen to my inner voice and tune out everything that didn’t fill me with passion. I made a choice for happiness and closed the chapter on a 25-year career in nursing forever.”

Her first poem, titled “Going Not Where I Know” tells about the early days of her struggle. It begins:

A ray of sun emerges, delivering dawn’s new day.
Eyelids heavy strain to open while in my bed I lay.
Thinking of the life I’ve known, the challenges I have faced,
Successes that I thought were mine were finalized in haste.

Routines I’ve come to master in these middle years I fear
Are all that’s left but empty dreams—a fate that’s hard to bear.
Questions pondered in years long passed of who I’m meant to be.
What shall I do? Where shall I go? What is my destiny?

The poem, published in an anthology by the International Society of Poetry, goes on for two more verses to question her life’s direction and ends with the promise of renewal she hopes to find in her new life:

So now the time has come I see to make a brand new start.
And hopes and prayers will guide me while I listen to my heart.
A million thoughts of plans to make are racing through my head.
But for now, I’ll stretch and smile and rise out of my bed.”

For the next few years, Ruth returned to school to pursue a new career in writing, graphic arts, web design and Internet marketing. During this time, she did what she had never dared to do. She chose to have total faith that God would be there for her if she listened to her heart. That took

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courage as she incurred incredible debt along the way, living on an equity line of credit and credit cards.

“I let go of everything and everyone that didn’t serve me in a positive way,” she says, “including some friends and family, expectations of others, and guilt and worry.”

She began a daily routine of reading books and listening to tapes that filled her with positive messages. Books like Napoleon Hill’s *Think and Grow Rich* and Steven Covey’s *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. At the same time, she distanced herself from everything negative including the evening news and chronically unhappy people.

“Sometimes I feared that I had lost my sanity,” Ruth says. “But deep in my heart, I just knew that I was taking the right path.”

Ruth’s new line of work excited and exhilarated her, but the jobs were sporadic and paychecks unreliable at first. Over time though, opportunities emerged and little by little she began to earn a living doing what she most loved. Long hours at the computer no longer felt like work but further fueled the passion to follow her inner voice.

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“While I was rediscovering the new me, I delighted in sharing my poetry with anyone who would listen,” Ruth said.

Ruth says that, from the perspective of the literary community, her writings were non-traditional and violated all the rules of writing “good” poetry.

“My inner voice told me not to listen,” says Ruth, who believes part of her mission is to bring poetry back into popularity with the masses. “I just knew academia wasn’t ready for me and probably never would be.”

As Ruth wrote and shared her verses with family, friends and acquaintances, she knew she was making a special connection. “I often saw tears in their eyes,” she said. “Many times they thanked me for telling their personal story or even changing their life.”

To better help realize her dream of sharing her poems with the world; Ruth joined Toastmasters to become a more effective speaker. Groups began asking Ruth to do poetry readings. Her first engagement was at a very upscale senior living facility. Afterwards, the woman who had invited Ruth sent a thank-you note with a check enclosed. The note said that the check was for two copies of her book (which at the time did not even exist). Ruth called the woman to ask about the note and found out the woman wanted the (nonexistent) books to use as Christmas presents later that year.

“At that moment I knew that a book was part of the grand plan and part of that newly opened door,” Ruth says. “*Visions in Verse*, my greatest gift and blessing from God, became available for distribution in December of 2001, just in time for that woman’s Christmas plans.”

Visions in Verse is divided into three sections: Personal Growth, Relationships and Inspirational, which includes a tribute to Florida called *My Home*.

This tropical environment, a land so new to me,
Is something of a paradise, just where I’ve longed to be.
An answer to my hopes and prayers, my expectations met,
A fantasy, a dream come true where I have no regret.

Predicable for months on end and nearly every day,
From blackened skies a downpour starts, then briskly goes away.
The air once warm and steamy now begins to dissipate.
A gentle breeze that cools the air, I find is worth the wait.

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I walk on sandy beaches where I hardly have a care.
Cocoa palms sway in the breeze with seagulls everywhere.
The water in the Gulf is warm, a gentle surf on shore.
Elation felt within my heart is mine for evermore.

Here I'll remain where I belong until my days are done,
No sacrifice or change too great to bring me where I've come.
The life I've known, the past I've lived, ahead so much to do—
I love this place where I feel whole and I can start anew.

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Since the book was published, many people have told Ruth how much her poems mean to them. “Whenever I need the right words, I find them in one of Ruth’s poems,” says Barbara Rudnicki, professional speaker and author. “They are insightful, uplifting and life changing.”

One woman called Ruth to say she had six of her poems on the refrigerator and read them every day. Another woman, a bank vice president, called Ruth after reading the poem “Opening Doors” and said that it was exactly what she needed to help her overcome a personal crisis she was facing. In the “Open Doors” poem, Ruth instills disempowered women with the strength to believe in their own greatness and urges them to claim the abundance and opportunities that exist all around them.

The fairer sex is what she’s called, a struggle to begin.
For in a world where man is king, it’s difficult to win.
But tenderness and nurturing are not to be misread,
A strength and power to rule the world lie in her pretty head.

Sometimes her magic’s camouflaged; she doesn’t know it’s there.
Caught up in daily mindless tasks, to dream she doesn’t dare.
Adversities and challenges are always in her way,
And yet she knows it’s possible to change her life one day.

Every stone she stumbles on and every time she falls,
It puts her where she’s meant to be—appears like blocks and walls.
And yet it is another door in spite of what it seems,
A lesson waiting to be learned, a gateway to her dreams.

Sometimes she must remind herself, the sun comes up each day.
And even in the darkest night, the moon will light her way.
No rainbow comes without the storm and peace may come with wars,
Yet in her heart she knows she’ll win if she keeps opening doors.

In May 2005, the second edition of Ruth’s book replaced the previous one. She also started adding art and frames to her poems so anyone could give them as special, heartfelt gifts. Most of Ruth’s framed poems come from the relationship section of her book and have such titles as *My Valentine*, *Graduation Day*, *On Mother’s Day* and *A True Friend*. The art for each of Ruth’s framed poems is a composition of multiple pictures and graphics that are blended to look like a

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single photograph. “This is very time intensive work,” Ruth says. “Each artistic display is a metaphor for the poem.”

Ruth also includes her book free with each gift boxed framed art poem. “I truly believe that we all have magic inside us,” Ruth says. “We find it when we let go of fear and limiting beliefs and follow that inner voice that fills us with passion and joy. That is the theme of my book and artwork.”

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Today, Ruth Kuttler is an accomplished poet, writer and graphic artist. She says that while her long-time career in nursing never was her ultimate calling, it added an understanding of the human condition and a depth to her poetry that is now repeatedly published in newspapers, magazines, and hardbound poetry anthologies. Two of her poems were selected among thousands to be recorded on DVDs and record collections produced by the International Society of Poetry. Ruth has also received editor’s choice awards from the International Society of Poetry and is recognized in the International Who’s Who of Poetry. “My poem *The Best Christmas Gift* is the very first piece in that book,” she says.

Ruth is also an award-winning speaker with repeated invitations to display her work and present her poetry to groups at local libraries and organizations in her community and throughout Florida.

“Today when I meet someone who has lost their job, I congratulate them,” Ruth says. “The world has changed and job security is a thing of the past. Most people settle for a job they don’t like and accept mediocrity. My greatest gift is to tell my story and give others permission to do what I did: step outside their comfort zone and find the open door—a door that leads to possibilities of freedom, fulfillment, happiness and inner peace.”

You can see Ruth’s entire inspirational collection online at www.visionsinverse.com.

Chris Kelley has written freelance articles for Guideposts, Omni and Field & Stream. At no *time*, did any of them *rhyme*. Chris can be reached at chris@polestarcom.com.

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