

Epilogue

The Women's Voices journey has changed me in profound and unforeseen ways. I had to face my fears and let go of any perception of control in order to travel the path. The journey meant relying on a Higher Power to guide me and trusting that I would meet the next right person, find the next right thing, or realize the next right step needed to complete this project.

Not only did I meet the right people, but the women I met were each inspiring in their own way. They were ordinary women like me. But they were also unsung heroines, facing their lives with dignity and grace. They taught me love, they taught me trust, they showed me humor and their experiences enriched my life.

In Ojai, California, where I had the blessing of spending several months writing, I was surrounded with the beauty of creation, warmed by the generous spirits of the people, and inspired by the creative energies of that special place.

When I returned to Alaska make money to keep on going, I was blessed by a job and even more blessed to be supported to continue writing when I felt like giving up. In January of 2010, I went to my boss, Peggy Brown, and expressed my concerns about not being able to finish the book and work. I realized I could live with this project never being successful at all, but I couldn't live with myself if I didn't finish it. I owed that to the women who had taken the time to be interviewed and to share their lives so openly and so generously. Peggy supported my dream, allowing me time to face my obstacles head on.

So once again I set off in my Honda CRV, this time more sure of my ability to maneuver the car ramp onto the ferry, and started south once again, acutely aware of facing my fears of both failure and of success. And once again, the miracles began the moment I let go – friends gave me places to stay to write, helped with editing the

video, and people appeared to provide help, support, kindness and healing. Miracle after miracle of God's grace poured forth the moment I let go and let God!

I learned that it truly is the journey, not the destination that makes life so rich and so complete. I learned that money and jobs had a way of appearing when they were needed and when I trusted in the Creator to provide. I never starved, I paid my bills, I met my obligations, and I learned the joy in living simply.

I learned to accept help – something I had previously found difficult and even somewhat shameful. The lie I believed to be true was that I could and should be “independent.” I faced the lie head on and found a greater truth in how incredibly interdependent I am with all that is.

I learned to trust. I trusted God, I trusted my instincts. I trusted the messages that came in answer to prayer and meditation. I faced my demons of insecurity and learned that security comes only in freedom from fear of not enough.

I went from feeling sorry for myself for one failed dream, to feeling humbled and thankful for the realization of another. My marriage had ended in divorce after 32 years, but a new life opened up before me. It was a life I never could have had in the marriage we had created. In the unraveling of the knotted ball of yarn that had become my relationship with my ex-husband, I found the strand that was mine and mine alone. I learned to own what was mine and to let go of all I had carried that didn't ever belong to me. The burdens lessened and the pack I carried became lighter indeed.

I learned to let go of my children, Joy and Sarah, and to rejoice that they were adults whose lives really could and should go beyond their lives with me. I learned to love them as adults, as strong and independent women whom I respect and admire for the people they have become. I learned to better appreciate and respect more fully my mother, Millie Stark, for her strength and perseverance though all of life's difficulties.

I learned that the wisdom of the grandmothers surrounds us. To hear it, all one has to do is ask. I learned that it is in the quiet of those who wait to talk, that wisdom speaks the loudest. I learned that no matter how much society, institutions, ideologies, organized religions, governments or armies wish to silence it, the wisdom of the grandmothers will always prevail because it is born of love itself.

As I sit at the end of the Women's Voice journey, I learned that the most important prayer I can offer is the prayer of thanksgiving. I am so thankful to the Creator, to the women I met, to those whose support has come forward, and to those who will

continue to come forward along the way. I rejoice in the journey, in the service, in the difficulties and in the sunshine of the spirit that has embraced me.

My prayer is that all who read this book will be emboldened to follow their own path, enlightened in their despair, enriched in their sense of who they are and embraced by the love and the beauty that surrounds us. My prayer is that the voices of all women will be heard throughout the world, and that as we listen we will heal not only ourselves and future generations of women, but our mother earth as well.

*A portion of the proceeds from the sale of
this book will go to support a Women's and
Children's Center in the
Sakha Republic (Yakutia).*

Thank you for your support.

*To order copies of this publication and to see
short video clips of the interviews with some of
these women, please go to
<http://www.WomensVoicesProject.com>*