



A Personal Note from Single Steps Strategies Founder Mary Grace Musuneggi

Roadside Assistance on Life's Journey

On a recent business trip to Virginia, I discovered that I had flown into the wrong airport. Having often gone off-course during my life journey, experience had taught me to stay calm, call for help and devise an alternate plan. With the assistance of my business partner, within minutes I was on a shuttle to the correct airport; where an hour later, I picked up another shuttle to my correct destination.

I couldn't help but be grateful for the assistance of good business associates, and I took a moment to be grateful for all the friends, family and associates who have helped me over rough spots along the way to my life's destinations. Of course these people have a vested interest in me; as they love me, or care about me or share their lives, both personal and professional, with me.

But how many times had I risen to the challenges of life with the help of those outside this intimate circle of family and friends? How grateful I needed to be to have encountered the "kindness of strangers." How often have I called upon "outsiders" to help when life's journeys took me over rough road?

As I sat in the airport shuttle, my thoughts drifted to a Friday evening, one summer at few years ago. On the spur of the moment, I had decided to take a drive to the mountains of West Virginia to visit a friend, and get away from the hustle and heat of summer in the city. I had driven these mountain roads so many times before that I thought my car could have been on automatic pilot. But as I got deeper into the mountains, and well off the beaten track, nighttime and heavy fog set in. In the darkness, I could see only some taillights up ahead, and I decided to follow them; lights disappeared and I found myself alone and in unfamiliar territory. I stopped the car and stepped out. As visions of "Deliverance" and "Children of the Corn" ran through my head, I realized that I was totally and completely lost. I got back in the car, locked the doors and awaited panic to set in. And it did...as I tried to get a signal on my cell phone that never seemed to work in the mountains. Miraculously, I was able to call my friend, who, while trying to calm me down, admitted that he had absolutely no idea where I could be. No road signs, no cars, no houses, a deer running by and one dim light far in the distance, were the only useless clues to where I was. With my friend fading in and out on the phone, I decided to drive towards the light. I found myself in the parking lot of the Mountain Glen Church of God. Somehow that brought me comfort. Although my friend still had no idea of my whereabouts, he decided to call some friends in the area to see if anyone was familiar with the location.

And some of them called their friends... and so on, and so on. Hours went by and no one was able to help.

Just as I was beginning to believe that I would have to stay there until the church opened on Sunday, it came to me that the people who would know where things are in the state of West Virginia, would be the state police of West Virginia. My friend hung up; and within minutes the next call I received

came from a voice with a deep accent saying, "This is Officer Johnson, ma'am. So how ya doin', little lady?" Trooper Johnson, not only knew where I was but he had sent a trooper out to find me; while he also gave my friend direction on how to find me, too.

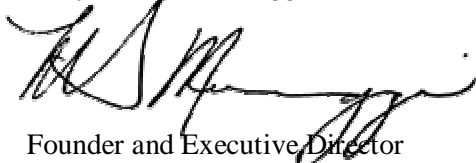
Since I believe that all of life's adventures are learning experiences, this was no exception. This adventure reminded me:

- that we should not follow the crowd unless we are sure they are going where we want to be.
- that good friends and secure surroundings can always make us feel better
- to always ask for help when necessary, instead of floundering around in the dark, and
- that even when friends and family want to help, sometimes we need to get professional help too. We should seek this out sooner, than later.

Whether we find ourselves lost in the darkness of night, or just in the wrong airport, all of life's adventures begin with a challenge and all challenges can be overcome with the right kind of help. Challenges make life interesting, overcoming them makes life meaningful.

And all of life's journeys begin with a single step.

Mary Grace Musuneggi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Grace Musuneggi', written in a cursive style.

Founder and Executive Director

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Single Steps Strategies is a life planning program designed to empower women to take control of their lives through information, education and a group of professional resource providers. For more information visit our website at www.SingleStepsStrategies.com