

## Defying the Odds

By Maureen Tazzioli

Do you know someone who has successfully accomplished something that others deemed impossible? Someone who despite their many challenges still found a way to accomplish all that they desired? Maybe this someone is you! Maybe you are the one that others are looking toward for guidance and inspiration. Take a few minutes right now to think about someone you know who is defying the odds. What is it that makes this person so unique?

While on a flight back home to Regina I sat beside the most interesting lady. With her petite stature she carried herself with much grace, style and sophistication. Her flare of elegance and confidence had me believe that she knew what it was like to live a full life, complete with disappointments and accomplishments, and because of this I knew that there was plenty she could teach me, and I was correct.

In our conversation together she explained the process she took to become a Canadian citizen and how life in Canada is most rewarding for her. She shared great news of how proud she is of her five children because every one of them found careers that brought them much joy, and although their careers have them living in different countries she does all she can to travel the world to see them.

As she talked I listened with great interest and then finally my curiosity got the better of me and I just had to know. *"If you don't mind, may I ask you how old you are?"* With a little smile, she said, *"Not at all, I am 82 years of age, a recent widow and lover of life. I am fortunate to have had the courage to defy the odds and live my life to the fullest, and from my perspective I plan on continuing to live a full life because I have learned a long time ago that to be fully alive means to appreciate all that life throws at you, and I am not done learning yet."* Sitting next to her beaming face I could tell that she was a woman of strength, and so without her even realizing it she became a complete inspiration to me.

Now even though this delightful lady is just one out of many who have defied all odds, here are a few things I learned in our conversation.

1. **Listen to your heart** - People will always have an opinion about what you should do, could do, or have to do, but only you will know for sure what is best, and if you become confused, then quiet yourself long enough to listen to your heart. For in your own heart lies the answer to many of your concerns.
2. **Stay informed...Always be ready to learn** - There will never be a time in your life when you can close the book of knowledge and say you have learned enough. There will never be a time when you will know everything, so it is important to keep learning and improving yourself every day. It was suggested that many people will associate retirement as a time when they no longer have to learn, a time when they can relax and have fun and enjoy the lifestyle they worked hard to achieve. However, this delightful lady reminded me that life is an experience, the more we learn about ourselves and others the more inclined we are to give back.

3. **It's okay to be different...Celebrate your own uniqueness** - When we are so busy trying to please others we can lose sight of the positive qualities that make us unique. To truly appreciate the goodness in life, we must do all we can to remain true to ourselves and our own uniqueness. It is important to celebrate the person we are choosing to be.
4. **Work toward excellence in all that you do** - If we are going to take the time to learn something or do something, why not give it our all? Life's fulfillment comes from understanding that although none of us will ever be perfect we can still strive toward excellence in all that we do. Remaining open to trying new things we should look for ways to always improve ourselves while having fun.
5. **Laugh plenty** - Life is full of twists and turns and although many of us believe we carry the road map to our own success, life has a way of reminding us what is really important. Having a sense of humor and being able to laugh at ourselves and those unexpected situations can make life more enjoyable.

I have no idea if I will ever see this lovely lady again, but the time we spent together will always be a treasured memory.

*As an international speaker, corporate trainer and President of The Maureen Tazzioli Executive Corporation, Maureen promotes the importance of raising standards to influence positive change. Call Toll Free at: 1.855.280.2920 or visit [www.maurentazzioli.com](http://www.maurentazzioli.com) for more information on how you can involve Maureen at your next event. This article is reprinted with the author's permission.*

