

Ladies Night In ... After

July 25, 2015

Raleigh, North Carolina

Presented by

Dr. Anne Sourbeer Morris

anne@futuresinspired.com

“It’s never too late to create good memories ... It’s never too late to create a good life ... It’s NEVER too late to begin again! ... AFTER ...

Who knows where life will lead?

Good evening! For those I have not met, I am Anne Sourbeer Morris, AKA Dr. Anne!

It is an honor for me to join you at Ladies Night In – After in Raleigh, North Carolina!

All of us have had an after ... All of us strive to survive our “after”

After disappointment

After heart ache
After tragedy
After adversity
After challenge
After change
After loss
And yes, even after success

Our life is a series of journeys ... a series of after's ... A perennial series of beginnings and endings.

For me ... The most recent after was the journey to unexpected pathways ...

The Journey to Unexpected Pathways - the most recent great adventure on my career/life journey - began ten years ago with the words ... "I have feelings for someone else."

A thirty-five year marriage ended ... as I was retiring from a successful 35 year career as a teacher and educator - a director of school counseling – in rural, urban and suburban schools - and a great adventure began, but not before much heartache, anguish and much fear.

The adventure ultimately resulted in ... continuing my education – hence "Dr. Anne" - a move from Pennsylvania to NC, a new

teaching gig at Salem College and the publication of my first book – Unexpected Pathways: The Journeys of Women in the Workforce!

Many of you in this room are at crossroads, pondering the next steps in your own great adventure ... Answering the question what comes after?

Know that:

This is YOUR time!

Where ever YOU are.

Whatever age YOU are ...

Whatever stage YOU are

This IS your time!

Believe it!

Believe in the power of YOU!

And ... Be inspired!

Again ... When you are open to the possibilities, who knows where life will lead?

Our most basic motivation in developing the Unexpected Pathways project was to inspire individuals to move forward with courage and the hope of a better future to come –

To embark upon the career and life of her dreams –

To believe in herself ...

To survive, thrive and to prevail!

To survive challenge and to be victorious.

In writing Unexpected Pathways ... I was inspired by the career-life journeys of women.

I was inspired by how little we know of one and other ... Our friends, colleagues, and neighbors ... The women sitting next to us

The challenges,
the barriers,
the joys,
the successes ... the invisible scars they bear.

How many of us bear invisible scars ... scars that we hide from the world? Consider the invisible scars you bear.

While we do our best to hide these scars, fearing others will shun us, I have found that we are protected when we are honest and share our fear or situation ... I have found that people, for the most part will help and support and that they will offer grace.

In writing Unexpected Pathways ... We were inspired to make a difference.

The Women of Unexpected Pathways are:

twenty three

diverse

multi-generational women

Demonstrating incredible:

Determination

Perseverance

Courage

and Resilience.

The Women of Unexpected Pathways tell stories of

Greatness and Frailty

Survival and Victory

Faith, Healing, and of Love

Meet the Women of Unexpected Pathways on page 3 of your handout and on this poster. There is great beauty in generational and cultural diversity – at any age and at any stage.

In the epilogue of the Unexpected Pathways, I wrote:

True wisdom is ageless.

True idealism is ageless.

Idealism must not be assigned to the young or wisdom to the old.

As we create our career/life journey, we must embody both idealism and wisdom.

We must maintain the enthusiasm and passion of the young while embodying the conviction and perseverance of those who paved the way for us.

Our hearts are ageless.

Our dreams are ageless.

The belief in our journey must be perennial and unwavering.

The Women of Unexpected Pathways created their careers and their life ... Their way! And you should too!

The coming together of the Women of Unexpected Pathways was the Law of Attraction at its best. Only two women – Clare and Molly – were known to me before I embarked on this journey.

As for the rest – they magically showed up in my life.

Some of them responded to a survey I conducted to scaffold the concept of unexpected pathways.

Talk about magic ... By word of mouth, determination and perseverance – incredibly over 700 women from 50 states and 20 countries responded to the survey.

Other women, from across the nation like me, found themselves in a wonderful place called Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Many of us met when I served as the first president of the Winston-Salem Chapter of the National Association for Professional Women.

The Women of Unexpected Pathways are now more than colleagues, we are friends.

When you are open to the possibilities ... Magic occurs!

The Women of Unexpected Pathways did not see themselves as victims of life circumstance nor were they dissuaded by the words of others proclaiming a negative destiny upon their lives.

Each woman held strong to her convictions and forged ahead despite adversity. Each are survivors. Each were tenacious and determined.

Each woman courageously gifted us with her story – with the goal to make a difference in the lives of others – to raise awareness, to

unify and to offer inspiration by recounting her journey and sharing lessons learned along the way. Each women recounts her after's and her new beginnings.

As we consider our “after” ... our survival ... and our success, we ultimately must create change in our lives. Change? Yes, change. We must perennially change but we don't have to like it do we?

Remember the old adage, If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got? The same goes for change after ...

We must be cautious; it is so very easy to fall back upon that which is comfortable and familiar ... That which we perceive to be safe. But to fulfill our destiny and to create the life or our dreams, we must change our thinking and to change our lives ... We must get out of our comfort zone and navigate uncharted waters.

We musts live our hours so that our days are great!

Consider these four steps

1. Seek a positive perspective
2. Become a solution builder
3. Practice flexibility and resilience
4. Be courageous

In the days of my after “those words” – I have feelings for someone else – as I strove to create a new life for myself ...my mantra became:

Never, never, never give up ... survive thrive prevail.

And maybe, also, *Never let 'em see you sweat ... Fake it till you make it!*

Honestly ... in the beginning, I only thought of survival and in setting a positive example for my two daughters ...

I also wanted to be able to look myself in the mirror when I survived ... Sometimes, I don't know how I got through the initial shock and betrayal.

But prevail we must, as the next moment may hold our victory ...

What is the next victory in your career/life journey?

If nothing could stop you, what would the next step in your journey be?

What is your dream? Your vision?

Turn to your neighbor and briefly share that dream ... That vision ... Each of you will have one minute to share your dream. I will let you know when to change and conclude.

Now consider ... What is holding you back? What barriers do you face?

Something?

Someone?

YOU?

Turn to your neighbor and share ... Each of you will have one minute to share your barriers. I will let you know when to change and conclude.

My goal is to encourage you to escape the burdens of your fear ... to believe in the power of you!

Faith crushes fear and offers hope!

In this light, I am giving you homework

- Homework that will identify and banish your fears.
- Homework that clarifies your dreams.

- Homework that develops your personal plan of action for today, tomorrow, this month, and for the next six months
- Homework that helps you to make a commitment to yourself.
- Homework that makes you a solution builder!
- Homework that puts you on the road to victory!

Your homework starts on page 7 of your handout!

I have pencils and index cards here for you if you want to begin your homework after the event this evening!

So today, you will take one step in the directions of your dreams ... Tomorrow, you will take another!

You will arrive at your destination before you know it – Doing it **YOUR** way!

In the process, I encourage you to seek skill and knowledge – no one can take knowledge or skill away from you – never ever

I encourage you to invest in yourself ... To invest in your future ... **YOU ARE** worthy.

I encourage to live life well.

In living life, we honor ourselves; we honor the generations of women who have gone before us and we honor those who will follow.

In living life, we create our legacy ... a legacy we pass on to others – family, friends, colleagues and communities

I have always found that when I am the most joyous and peaceful, I am the most productive.

Discover your place of peace. Discover your place of joy. Be good to yourself – After.

As we conclude I repeat ...

This is YOUR Time!

Whatever age you are ... Whatever stage you are ...

This is YOUR Time

Believe it!

Believe in the Power of YOU

Be inspired!

Live your happily ever after! And ... Do it YOUR way!

Who knows where life will lead?