

Cleaning Up Your Act

The Minnie Kerchevsky Stories II

Real wisdom can often be found
in the most unlikely places



A Collection of Stories For Growth by

DEE SHIPMAN

Cleaning Up Your Act

NO 006/B1

First Edition – September 2012

Printed and bound in the UK by

NEW OCEANS PUBLISHING

New Oceans have asserted their rights under the Copyright, Designs and Patents act 1988 to be identified as the authors of this work.

All rights reserved in all media. This book may not be copied, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any format or medium without specific prior permission of the copyright owners.

Contact New Oceans for information about multiple licenses, library copies and review copies.

NEW OCEANS

New Oceans House

39 Jennings Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4NX, UK

Tel: (44) (0)1727 869782

www.new-oceans.co.uk

info@new-oceans.co.uk



CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Having A Minnie Break
3. Thank You Terry Wogan
4. Maps!
5. A Position Of Responsibility
6. Second Chances
7. Dain And Toby - A Different Point Of View
8. Not To Be Sneezed At
9. Left Overs

Introduction

Real wisdom can often be found in the most unlikely places....not from teachers, coaches, professors and so on, but from ordinary people who have their own life experiences to draw on to help others.

Cleaning Up Your Act is a collection of the stories of one of these very special people.....

Minnie Kerchevsky is a so-called 'ordinary woman', a cleaner, a 'daily', with no pretensions, no super-ego... just a desire to make things better in any way she can; helping those around her to "clean up their acts" in her own unique and heart-warming way!

Minnie believes that what stops us being happy is thinking we don't have choices - and that feel-good is a state of mind we can always choose to be in!

So in 'Cleaning Up Your Act', we gradually learn about Minnie's own life and events - and how she dealt with challenges and learned how to see raindrops as sunbeams in disguise! - interwoven through the stories she shares about the people she impacts with the homespun wisdom that is the essence of who and how she is, because of who and how she has been.

Each of us has met Minnie, or someone like her, in our lives... and if we haven't, we're the poorer for it - so here's our chance to put that right!

MEET THE AUTHOR

Dee Shipman began her professional career as an actress and singer, both in the theatre, and on TV, where she appeared in series such as The Avengers (Propellant 23) and Emergency - Ward 10. She then went on to a very successful career in radio, including co-presenting a



weekly series for the BBC Teen Scene, and having two series of her own for Radio Luxembourg Ready Steady Radio and Kids Like Us. During this period Dee was signed to Decca Records, and released a single of Mel Tormé's classic "Comin' Home Baby!" Dee also wrote for the magazine Pop Weekly, in which she had her own weekly column. As a singer, Dee recorded a twelve track LP that was produced by Norman Newell. The album featured such evergreen standards as "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?", "The Way You Look Tonight" and "One Hand, One Heart". The album was finally released in July 2008 by Stage Door Records. Titled 'She Isn't Me' the album concludes with a new recording from Dee Shipman and Roger Webb's musical 'Emma'.

Dee has made several films, which included starring as Mrs. Burke in the 1972 motion picture Burke And Hare opposite Harry Andrews and Derren Nesbitt, and which Dee described as "Glamorous no! Culture no! But fun? YES!"

SONG WRITING

Dee first started writing lyrics when she began her song-writing collaboration with composer Roger Webb. Their considerable output included writing "Sad Song Lady" for Blossom Dearie, "The Rainbow Bridge" for Danny Williams and "Making It By Myself" for the Kenneth Tynan and Clifford Williams musical *Carte Blanche* at the Phoenix Theatre in London ... the show wasn't well reviewed - but the song got rave notices! Dee and Roger also composed music and lyrics for three musical concepts *A Kid For Two Farthings* (based on the 1955 film of the Wolf Mankowitz modern classic story); *The Last Touring Love Show*; and *Emma* (based on the life of Emma Hamilton).

Dee went on to write songs with Marc Wilkinson, Werner Becker, George Garvarentz, Albert Van Dam, Ralph Lewin, and Herbert Chappell.

And then in 1976, Dee began a very important songwriting partnership with Charles Aznavour, which still continues, and has produced the Aznavour cult favourite "Pretty Shitty Days" as well as "A Very Private Christmas" and "You Make Me Hungry For Your Loving" amongst many others. It was Aznavour who introduced Dee to Petula Clark, and Dee and Petula wrote their first song together in 1978, and have been friends and partners since then. The Clark – Shipman partnership produced the original stage musical *Someone Like You* which toured the United Kingdom and transferred to the West End in 1990. Dee and Clark have also written over 50 songs together for Clark's commercial

albums and singles, plus their second musical, *J'Accuse.....!*, based on the life of Emile Zola, and the Dreyfus Affair. Two songs from the score can be heard on the CD *In Her Own Write*, released by Sepia Records in 2007.

In 1989, while continuing to write all Aznavour's English lyrics, and also working on two musicals with Clark, Dee wrote the script and co-produced a number of TV docudramas, including *Blavatsky*, and *What happens When We Die*, as well as *Pétain*, charting the life of Philippe Pétain. The film featured Harry Andrews in the title role, his last film.. (Portions of the film's score, composed by Clark, can be heard on *In Her Own Write*.)

Aznavour and Dee together also devised and wrote the songs for a musical workshop of Molly Bloom's soliloquy from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which was performed at the Edinburgh International Festival by Eartha Kitt.

Charles Aznavour's musical *Lautrec*, with English lyrics by Dee, premiered at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth in March 2000 before transferring to the Shaftesbury Theatre, London. Currently Charles and Dee are working together on several new songs to be included in a US and Canadian production of the show.

Dee is also currently working on *J'Accuse.....!*, having now completed the book of the show as well as the lyrics.

NLP, COACHING, TRAINING, & WRITING

Dee is an NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Master Coach, Trainer, and Master Coach Trainer, and she and Paul Jacobs are partners in the Training & Coaching Organisation Paul founded nearly 20 years ago, New Oceans. Together they run regular Life, Business, Education, Coaching, and Performing & Creative Arts trainings, workshops, and seminars, in the UK and in the Middle East, and are both also extremely successful Master Coaches.

In 2006, Dee wrote the world's first - and only! - NLP Songs For Change, a unique musical interpretation of the tools and techniques of NLP. The music for this CD is in Country style, and was composed and performed by Wes McGhee.

Dee has also written several books of short stories, based on her NLP experiences:- The Sunbeam Collection Vol.1, The Sunbeam Collection Vol.2, and All We Are Is Our Stories. Vol.1. She has also written three volumes of the Magic 7 series - 'Coaching Tips', 'Stress Busting Tips' and 'Sales Tips'. Dee is currently writing Volume 2. of All We Are Is Our Stories, plus a book on Inspirational Parenting; and she has just completed writing - and illustrating! - her latest book, an NLP primer with a difference, The Mop Is Not The Cherry Tree!

Dee's passion is to grow others to fulfil their own potential, in whichever area it may be. So she is a well respected figure in the

corporate world, coaching senior executives in the business field. And of course in her own specialist areas of the performing and creative arts Dee is internationally known to have her own unique way of helping artists and artistes to achieve success.

She also has a great way of helping in all kinds of health challenges.

Cleaning Up Your Act - Part 1

HAVING A MINNIE-BREAK!

“Right Mum”, says Sarah Jane, as soon as I open the door and see her waiting on my doorstep, carrying a huge parcel “Come on, let’s get this inside”.

And in she comes, with Sam following; he gives me a kiss, smiles, and shrugs as if to say “What can you do when she’s set her mind on something?” And he’s right of course – when my Sarah Jane gets a bee in her bonnet about anything, nothing will stop her ‘til she’s let it fly free!!.

So in she marches, puts the parcel down on the sofa, and says,

“Right, Mum, come and open it!”

“But what is it? Why have you brought me something? It’s not my birthday....!”

“What, we can’t give you a present unless it’s your birthday!? Enough already! Open it!”

So I carefully start opening the wrapping paper, and folding it as I’m going, ‘til she grabs one edge of it, and starts tearing it off.....

"Oh come on, Mum, I mean this year! - I want you to see what we've got you!"

And as I pull the last bit of paper off the parcel, I see that inside is.....

"A suitcase? You've bought me a suitcase!? It's a lovely one, darling.....but what do I want with a suitcase?!"

"What you want with it is this, Mum - a person going on holiday needs a suitcase!"

"What do you mean, on holiday? Who's going on holiday?"

"You are, Mum!" she says, laughing, and hugging me. "You are! Now open it and see what's inside".

So I do, and it's an envelope, with my name on it. Now I'm really confused.....I open the envelope, and inside there's a little white cardboard wallet thing.....and inside that is something that says it's a 'confirmation of booking', and also some voucher things for a facial, and a hair-do, and a manicure and pedicure: and colour photos of a beautiful country house in Sussex!

Well, I don't know what to say, I just don't understand what's going on

"Sarah Jane, Sam - what is all this?"

And then Sam sits down next to me on the sofa, and puts his arm round me, and says ,

"Mum, we think it's time you had a bit of a break. You're always so busy looking after everyone else, it's your turn now."

"But I can't go away! I've got all my jobs - I can't let them down!"

"You won't be letting anyone down!" Sarah Jane laughs. "It's only a weekend! I suppose you can call it a Minnie Break....! You'll have massages, and all the wonderful health & beauty treatments, the whole package!"

"But I don't need it! I'm fine....."

"Yes, thank God you are. But you haven't stopped, even when you had the operation, you kept on working.....your body was 'mugged', remember?"

And we grinned at each other - she was reminding me of years ago, when my sister-in-law had had an operation; when she went for a check-up 4 weeks afterwards, the Consultant asked how she was, and she burst into tears! And when she apologised, and said she didn't understand why she was crying, the Consultant told her

"It's because you've been mugged".

"No I haven't", protested Ruby.

"Oh yes you have, my dear.....just because you gave your consent to the operation, and had an anaesthetic, all your body knows is that it was attacked with a knife - you've been mugged! And it needs a bit of gentle TLC, to recover".

"So you see Mum, your body needs time to be pampered now - and that's what this is.....it's our way of saying we love you, and we want you around for a long time.....so you're bloody well going to do this for our sakes even if you won't do it for you! Right? Right! So let's have no more arguments....you're going!"

And off she goes with the case, into my bedroom, and I follow her, like a child! And she says we're going to go through my clothes, and choose what to pack, and she's so excited, even more than I am, to tell you the truth.

But then gradually I begin to imagine what it'll be like at that beautiful place - just being totally looked after, pampered, spoilt, relaxing, eating wonderfully healthy meals, which someone else has cooked!....and best of all, for me, meeting a whole new lot of people.....and then I finally admit to myself, and to Sarah Jane.....

"You know what? I can't wait! Thank you both so much!"

And that was it.....the following Friday morning Sarah Jane drives me down to Sussex, to this Health Spa.....oh, it was like a stately home, in its own park! And my room was a suite, can you believe....huge, with my own bathroom, and a bed as big as my Jack's beloved White Hart Lane! And my own sitting room, even!

A palace, I tell you - and me the Queen of Sheba! (mind you, I've always wondered where that was, Sheba.....and did they really have a queen?) Then I see, on the table in front of the window, there's a big vase of flowers, and a card, welcoming me, and inviting me to change

into the bath robe that's hanging in the bathroom, and go down to the Spa treatment rooms for my first massage, at 11am.

The young woman is called Anna - she tells me that she's my masseuse for my stay here. I think she's Polish. And she asks me some questions first, about my health and so on.....and then she says

"So what's the main thing that you want to get from your weekend here?"

To be honest, I don't see why she needs to know! Maybe she's just making conversation? So I explain that actually I didn't plan to come, and I tell her about Sarah Jane, and Sam, and that's why I'm here. And I'm taking off the bathrobe and lying face down on the table, as she puts a warm towel over my bottom half, and starts massaging my back and shoulders, and I'm almost falling asleep, it feels so good.....!

"So you came because you really just wanted to please them"? ,

"Yes - I like to make them happy...."

"So what's important about them being happy?"

"Well if they're happy I'm happy as well"

Funny.....her voice sounds further away, but somehow clearer too....and she's saying

"And what does you being happy as well get you? What's important about it for you?"

"How strange.....I've never really thought about that, about what's in it for me..." I'm almost too relaxed to speak, but I hear myself telling her

"If we're all well, and together, I'm happy"

And I can see their faces, looking so worried when I had my operation, and I realise that maybe that's what's important to them as well.

Which is why they bought me this 'Minnie- break'.....and why I accepted it;- we were all driven by what was most important to us!

As I had a shower, and got ready to go for lunch in the Light Diet Room, I thought about that too.....about how I decided to have the light healthy salad and fruit lunch, and not the full cooked 3 course one. And you know what? It was true - I was making my choice because of what was important to me.....to be, and feel, better!

After lunch, I was booked for a facial - me, a facial! But still thinking about not having the full cooked lunch, I said to myself,

"Minnie, think of what this is costing the kids.....shouldn't you have had everything that was offered? Wouldn't that have been.....what do they call it in Morrison's?.....oh yes - VFM.....Value For Money!"

Then I could swear it was my Jack's voice in my head, said

"So? All this isn't value for money anyway?" And looking round me as I'm sitting being spoiled rotten in this wonderful place, yes, of course he's right.

But what's more important is how I feel after my healthy, light lunch....i know how much I mean to my family, as well as how much they mean to me. And I know that that's why I do everything I do - because I'm passionate about loving them: that's the most important thing in the world, that's what keeps me getting up every morning, since my Jack died.

And I might be wrong, but maybe, just maybe, what I've learned this weekend is that VFM is important, sure.....but to me, VFL - Value For Life - is even more so!

Cleaning Up Your Act - Part 2

THANK YOU, TERRY WOGAN!

You know something I think is very strange? It's how we can live so many years, doing what we do, being what we are - and maybe believing we know ourselves well.

We go through the days, the years, taking for granted that in this situation, we'll react in this way....because we usually do! All our experiences, it seems to me, sort of give us an automatic way to behave when things happen - because, as I said, that's how we've always done it.

It's like we don't even have to think what to do - we just do it!

But sometimes - and I don't know how you feel about this - but just sometimes, something happens in someone else's life, and we find ourselves wondering

"How on earth would I deal with something like that if it happened to me? Would I be able to cope?" Because we're never really sure, are we, as I said. if it's never happened to us?

Like the time Jack started getting short of breath when he walked down to the shops to get the papers, for instance, he agreed I should

cook him less chopped liver, less fried food, so he'd be carrying less weight; and for a while it seemed to be better.

But then he was getting the odd pain in his chest as well... and the doctor examines him, and all of a sudden Jack's not just overweight, he's got angina!

And he was great with it... he had tablets "in case", he kept the weight down anyway, and it certainly never kept him awake worrying about himself!

On the other hand, I was a bundle of nerves, worrying! Oy, the nights I would lie awake watching him as he was sleeping, with God knows what going through my mind - I even listened to make sure I could still hear his heart beating!! How crazy was that, I ask you!

And then there were nights I'd look at him, sleeping so peacefully, and a small scared part of me would wonder what I'd do if his heart did stop? How would I react? Would I be able to cope, if I woke up one morning, and found that had happened.....? I'd never seen anyone dead in real life, if you get my meaning! Would I be terrified that he wouldn't seem like my Jack any more, but just a dead body?

I felt embarrassed and worse, ashamed, of my thoughts and so I didn't say anything to anyone, just kept it all inside.

Then I was listening to Terry Wogan on the wireless one morning, (I still call it that, silly old-fashioned thing that I am!), okay, on the radio, and he has that 'God Slot' on, where a priest, or a rabbi, or whoever, is talking about how we don't have to always know how to deal with

things straight away.....and he says that new and unexpected things do happen, that we've never experienced before.

And then he says something that just hit me like a thunderbolt! He says

"After all, life is a work in progress, isn't it?"

And I thought

"That's fantastic! We can't know how to react to something that's new in our lives....so I don't have to worry about the 'what ifs?'. And I don't have to decide now about what I'll do about what life might or might not, throw at me in the future.....it's a work in progress!"

And there and then I made a decision:- I decided from now on I wouldn't make any decisions until if and when I needed to! I wouldn't worry about what might never happenbecause if I carried on being afraid of the future I'd be giving myself unnecessary aggravation, wouldn't I? Anyway, as someone very famous once said (sorry, I can't remember who it was)

"What is fear? It's almost always

False

Expectations

About

Reality!"

So, thank you, Terry Wogan - a work in progress....and not just life - me!