



***FINDING THE COURAGE TO  
OVERCOME FEARS...EVEN OF  
EATING BEETS!***

*<sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

*I John 4:18*

Fear can be so limiting. We carry thoughts which, over time, can balloon out of proportion and become life-paralyzing limitations. Sometimes, our fears are inconsistent with our reality. Living a life of joy every day means summoning the courage to face what we fear.

It is human nature for us to avoid the things we fear. Often, we cannot even remember their origins. Let me share a personal example of an irrational fear.

My mother was a master at creating joy within any company of people she encountered. Her name was melodic: Linnie Cordelia. To everyone who knew her, she was simply “Cordy”—the perfect nickname for someone so cordial, fun loving and energetic.

If you follow the etymology of names, Cordelia, in the Latin, means, “warm hearted.” As a character in Shakespeare’s play “King Lear,” Cordelia is the youngest and most loyal of the king’s three daughters. Loyal and warm-hearted are befitting descriptions of Mom.

I was always proud of her. Mom worked tirelessly to take care of us—my brother, sister and I. It was hard, but I never saw her cry about that. I never heard her say she wanted to give up. What I remember most is how she looked at us. With joy.

Mom had a real talent for making people feel comfortable in her presence. She was famous for summer bridge parties and for arranging people around the dining room table, spread generously with a lace tablecloth, for her best afternoon meal. Long before “let’s do lunch” was adapted as the *I-wanna-get-together* summons of busy women, my mom would assemble a select group of her friends, and all showed up promptly wearing crisp, pastel-colored summer dresses or the wide, circular skirts that were stylish at the time. (Did someone say *déjà vu*?)

This was not a sweat suit crowd. They were humble, working women who never ignored an opportunity to inject a dash of class into life when ordinariness just wouldn’t do. The consummate hostess, Mom balanced the afternoon with a smidgen of witty gossip—although I never heard her say a hurtful thing.

Then, there was that dinner party with the beets! Mom had invited an attractive couple to share our evening meal. They were seated with the family at our table, when, suddenly ... Bhoomm! The female guest collapsed. There we were, enjoying food and friendship. And this woman unexpectedly falls backwards onto the floor. It was drama that could throw a kid into heart-clutching panic. I’m talking about a pure Redd Foxx-as-Fred-Sanford, “Elizabeth, I’m-comin’-to-join-ya” moment.

I’d never seen a seizure before and didn’t know there was anything that could so violently change you from an animated conversationalist to a comatose body piled atop the dining room rug. That’s what Mom told me later—our guest had a seizure.

In the mind of an eight-year old, you ask yourself: what is the *one thing* that could cause a person to do that? I had not yet catalogued a description of illnesses. I just knew it couldn’t have been the delicious candied sweet potatoes! It must have been those *beets*.

Consequently, I have never eaten a beet since. It is also entirely possible that I have never eaten one at all—but if there is one thing that can cause total bodily collapse, it must be avoided at all costs. Beets! Strange food, that it is; beets have forced me to admit that this is a classic example of a baseless fear that I can overcome. I'm an adult now; I know better!

I keep telling myself: beets are antioxidants; they're good for you. So, in my quest for zero fear, the next time I see them on a salad bar, I'm definitely not going to gasp and whisper: *Danger! Faint food.*

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