

SUCCESS STORIES

Marlene Chism From bodybuilder to factory worker to motivational speaker...and beyond!

Sitting in the private plane flying to my speaking destination, it's hard to believe that less than five years ago I was working in a factory doing production work on the lines, to tearing down equipment for sanitation and driving a forklift. I spent over twenty years doing blue-collar work; desperately wishing for something more while sensing that time was running out.

Throughout my time at Kraft I searched to find life purpose. I went to cosmetology

school and obtained my license. I won several state bodybuilding contests even advancing to national competition. I took dance lessons including jazz and tap. I married. I attended college, taking figure drawing to management accounting without finding any answers. My life was a jigsaw puzzle that had been dumped out and none of the pieces fit together. I was stuck in the first of the three life tragedies: Knowing that you want something more but not knowing what it is.

The second tragedy is when you know what you want but don't believe it is possible. The third life tragedy is when you know what you want, you believe it's possible, but your commitment is tested in

your willingness to do what it takes.

It was a Marsha, a fellow bodybuilder who helped me out of the first life tragedy. Marsha asked me a question that I had never considered: "What would you do if there were no limits?"

After a bit of hesitation I said, "I would be a dancer or a choreographer."

She said, "That's not going to happen since you are in your thirties and live in Springfield Missouri!"

What's your second choice, she asked? "To be a motivational speaker and business trainer!" I replied. As Phil McGraw says, "If you can't name it you can't claim it."

Once you verbalize what you want,





you pass through the first tragedy and into the second tragedy: You know what you want, but you don't believe it is possible. I stayed in the second tragedy for over two years as I pondered the probability of a factory worker becoming a motivational speaker.

During this "second tragedy" I learned some things that I now believe is essential to my work in helping others to reach their potential: In order to get past the second tragedy, you have to develop a strong belief that what you want is possible. This means you must take full responsibility for every aspect of your life including your thoughts. For example, when I noticed myself thinking thoughts such as: 'you will never make it as a speaker because you are just a factory worker,' I would immediately say to myself, 'thank you for sharing' which became my way of acknowledging the message and quickly discounting it.

I learned that you must apply faith toward your dream. Faith is taking action toward a goal without getting a guarantee. In other words, your dream is not visible yet you work toward it until it starts to materialize. For example when I was competing in bodybuilding, I was "faithful" in working out consistently and I rarely cheated on my diet. As I took action, I noticed more muscle and less fat. With this observation, my belief increased and I continued to take action working toward the day of the contest. I learned to trust myself and to know that I would do

what it takes to be proud of myself on the day of competition. The same principles work in life for accomplishing any dream or goal.

As I got closer to finishing my college degree, I secured an internship with a national speaker, and the dream started to seem possible. I entered into the third tragedy.

When you enter into the third tragedy, the test of your commitment boils down to what you are willing to do to make the dream a reality. For me that meant quitting my full time job. After all, who is going to listen to a motivational speaker who works in a factory and hasn't taken any risks? The lesson in the third tragedy is about choice. Sometimes you have to give up one thing to get another. I had to give up a steady paycheck, a 401K and a sense of security. I changed my resignation date three times. I was afraid to step out of my comfort zone.

I created a mantra as I struggled to set a date to quit: "You can't dance when you're busy straddlin' the fence!" You must decide and then go for it!

There is a lot of anxiety when you make big life changes, but thank goodness for cardio theatre! During this time, working out on a regular basis became a sense of stability and the treadmill became my preferred method of meditation. When your thoughts are driving you crazy, there's nothing like a little cardio to clear your head and make you thankful for your next breath and when you're impatient or angry, pumping iron is a good use of the excess energy. Life is full of lessons: Bodybuiout choices.

Looking down at the scenery, as we are about to land, I realize that the puzzle pieces are starting to fit together. Those pieces including taught me about discipline and faith and the factory experience taught me abde factory worker, state titleholder in competitive bodybuilding, motivational speaker, business speaker, columnist and author.

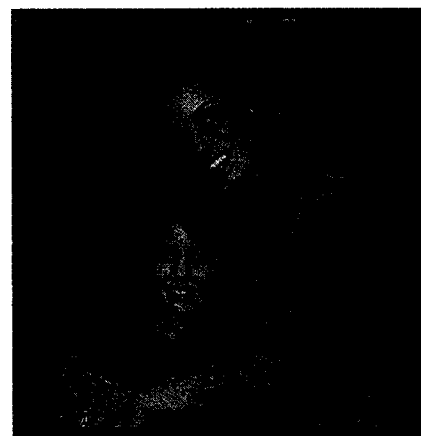
I've traded the factory floor for the professional platform, and instead of making people look good on the outside; I help them discover what's on the inside. Where I used to be a bodybuilder, I am

now a relationship builder.

I help those that are searching get through the three life tragedies. Count yourself lucky if you have escaped the first tragedy. I can help you believe and encourage you to take action, but it is still up to you to answer the first question, 'What do you want?'

Marlene Chism is a professional speaker and trainer. She works with companies that want to build strong business relationships and with people who want to be better communicators. She can be contacted at www.icareconsult.com or 417.831.1799.

Michelle Gannon How I Do It? My Life As Working Mom and Fitness Buff.



Being a mom is a job in and of itself, as I'm sure many of you would agree. I have one child, my daughter Jordan. She just turned eleven and being a good parent to her is a top priority. Everyday I try to be the best I can be for my family. I try to be there as much as possible for my daughter, even as I try to keep my personal priorities, including fitness, on track. Luckily, I have a job which allows me the flexibility to spend as much time I can with my