

## **Milley**

## **Building on a Passion**

Milley was a successful Organizational Development (OD) Consultant and Trainer. She had a creative and fulfilling career in which she coached leaders and their teams to gain insight and adopt transformative behaviors that led to greater fulfillment for themselves and greater effectiveness in their organizations. As a life-long learner, she pursued leading edge theories, participated in innumerable self-improvement and enlightenment programs, and designed innovative workshops and seminars. She was an inspirational speaker who commanded the attention and respect of her audiences.

Unfortunately, at age 57, she discovered that she had muscular sclerosis and was losing her mobility and stamina. She realized she had no option but to retire. Certainly, this was an earth-shattering turn of events. She moved from her career central location to take over her family home. Her husband, who had joined her thriving consultancy moved with her and continued to run the business. He soon divorced her and drove a hard bargain financial settlement. Milley became depressed and lost her sense of purpose and direction.

All the transformational techniques she had pursued in her career failed to yield purpose and direction. She experienced deep grief and sense of loss for her identity, purpose, focus, worth, and presence as a thought leader. Fortunately, this former professional trainer, speaker, and role model began to process her grief and losses through writing poetry. This woman who was only an average writer began to write powerful and inspiring poetry that dealt with her losses—health, partnership, identity. She wrote and published two books and began hitting the bookstores doing signings and readings. She conducted writing workshops and slowly redefined herself.

Milley rebounded from her loss of health and husband to build on her innate talents of learning, transforming, speaking, teaching, and connecting with willing audiences. Today, at 85, she lives in an assisted living facility and still speaks to local groups, facilitates writing workshops in her community, and shares her passion for intentional living. She created a brief video entitled “Who is Aunt Milley Anyway?” In that professionally photographed and edited video, she described her career highlights with video clips and still photos. In other words, her legacy was so important to her that she left a clear and compelling record for her friends and family members.

Milley is a great example of someone who had to go into forced retirement for health reasons and managed to take her talents and determination with her. She made lemonade out of lemons and is still a respected, inspirational, and impactful presence.