

## *Mesu's Wild Ride*

At the first women's conference I was invited to keynote, I shared this dream as part of a talk on balancing the time and emotions of women's friendships. I was soon teaching three times a week at our local church and traveling to speak at retreats, conferences, and miscellaneous events 2-3 times a month—as well as being a pastor's wife and mom of two elementary-aged girls.

Two years earlier, I'd been diagnosed with fibromyalgia and three years *later*—beginning in July of 2002—I would end up in bed for six months with an unknown physical ailment. In November of 2003, Mayo Clinic diagnosed me with POTS, and I began experiencing migraines 1-2 times a week. By 2005, the migraines came daily, and my church involvement and speaking ministry were minimal at best.

My Heavenly Father is so gentle, so patient, and so very loving. He warned me in so many ways that I was doing too much, heading for a brick wall, but I didn't listen...

**Tuesday, September 28, 1999 @ 6:15am**

### **A DREAM...**

I was the daughter of a man who owned a traveling show. My father was crippled so I had to do it all. I performed (tap danced) in the show – actually, I was the main attraction (played by Susan Surrandon, by the way ☺ ) I transacted all the business, ran errands, and fixed anything that was broken. Even though I knew my father was near and confined to a wheelchair, he never appeared in the dream. One day I needed to get a part for our broken stage equipment, so I hopped onto my Harley-Davidson - ☺ - and off I went.

I was proud of this bike, but it was new to me, and I didn't really know how to drive it. As I snaked through back streets and alleys, I passed gas stations with greasy mechanics busy about car repairs. They would look up at me as I whizzed past. To my surprise, they offered no cat calls or snide comments about my Harley.

When I finally got out of town and onto a nice stretch of road through the countryside, instead of relaxing into the easier drive, I found myself still in the same dangerous “predicament”. Since leaving home, I'd been riding at top speed; my left hand holding the left handlebar while my whole body flopped alongside the bike like a flag in the wind! I kept trying to reach for that right handlebar and get control of the motorcycle—where the brake and throttle were located. Now, on this nice, straight country road, the Harley's speed increased! I zealously reached one leg toward the footrest, but any extra effort strained my left hand's grip. I feared I couldn't hold on if I tried to change my position in any way.

Still flapping in the wind, I noticed the scenery passing by looked like California. Each irrigated field looked like an estate with beautiful vineyards and lush trees and gardens. I thought, “I'll bet they can plant and harvest twice a year—and get twice the return as farmers with one planting in Indiana.” Turning a slight corner, I was again reminded of my complete lack of control. Still on this crazy countryside highway at break-neck speed, I noticed there were huge spider webs in the trees alongside this road. Each web looked as if a deer hide hung in the middle of it. I was officially creeped-out and terrified when the Harley inexplicably slowed as a little village came into view, allowing me to settle on the seat as the bike guided me on the town's dirt paths between broken down houses.

Evidently, I'd arrived at my destination. The bike stopped in front of a small general store. When I entered, a man behind the counter handed me a brown bag. I didn't even look in the bag. I just went back to the Harley and immediately started the bike to return to the city. Without any help from me, the motorcycle again picked up speed quickly, and I went racing through this little village. I saw children playing and deer running around the houses, yards, and trees. I cried out, “Oh, Lord, don't let anything get in my way! I can't handle anymore surprises!”

I looked to the side of the road and saw a deer's head mounted in a spider's web. Inspecting it as I raced past, flopping and dodging children, I realized it wasn't a real deer's head. Rather, the deer head was part of the spider web—beautiful and intricately woven into a work of art! The motorcycle raced out of the village and the sound of children's laughter faded behind me. I was again on the country straightaway, going too fast to gain control. Even amid the peril, I was awestruck: What kind of spider could create a web so ornate? Colors, eyes, antlers—all so real looking.

As I raced back toward the city, I glimpsed again the same vineyards and gardens, but this time I saw spider webs like in the village. How had I missed them the first time? These had deer hides...no, wait...those were deer heads just like the ones I saw in the village. I was going too fast to get a better look—so frighteningly fast, I couldn't focus on anything. After passing many of them, I realized they were like a hologram—at first seeing the hide, but if focusing longer or from a different angle, the deer head appeared.

Tearing my eyes away, I turned my attention ahead and saw the city's tall buildings looming large. As scary as my slalom ride through the city streets had been, it was better than the tremendous speed of this runaway Harley through the country. Still grasping only the left handlebar, I shrieked when the Harley took me snaking through city streets at the same speed and, "Oh, NO!" I cried. "We're taking a short-cut!"

The bike took me down a small alley I'd seen on my way out of town, and I was headed toward a dead end brick wall. I closed my eyes and tightened my exhausted left-handed grip. The sudden sound of tires squealing and a quick right turn jerked me to attention and brought me down hard on the seat. Eyes wide now, the Harley's front wheel shot into the air and back wheel chirped, shooting me straight through a mechanic's garage! The man slid out from under the car he'd been working on and shook his head. Rather than being angry about my shortcut through his garage, he simply went back to his work.

Heart in my throat, I was suddenly at the end of my wild ride and back at the place we'd set up for the traveling show. I rushed into my dressing room and donned my performance costume, then waited backstage for my cue. As I stood there, still for the first time in hours, I let myself think about the day's ordeal.

Tears burned the back of my eyes. A lump clogged my throat. But I couldn't let the emotions overtake me. Though I deeply needed to process and express all that I'd seen and experienced, I had to perform in just a few moments. No one wanted to see a sad traveling show. My cue came from the stage manager, so I wiped the few tears and checked my smile in the mirror. I was the lead dancer, my costume a pink & black playboy bunny. Tacky? Somebody has to make a living...

The show ended. The audience left. And I suddenly remembered the unopened brown bag I'd collected from the village general store on my break-neck errand. I retrieved the bag from the Harley and looked inside. I found a miniature toolbox with tiny little tools—a wrench, a hammer, a crowbar—each one about one inch in length. Why hadn't I asked to use my father's *regular-sized* tools? A spark of anger flickered into flame. Why would a loving father make me do all the work? Go through all that danger to get such tiny tools. Why hadn't he stopped me from leaving this morning? Then I remembered. *I never told him anything was broken.* In fact, I hadn't spoken to him all day.

Chastising myself for the unkindness I'd felt toward my wheelchair-bound father, I vowed to do better in the future. "Hey, dad," I called out, "how about you come and help me fix the stage. We can use my new little tools!"

**And then I woke thinking of how frighteningly similar the dream is to my out-of-control life and the unseen Heavenly Father I confine to His place in the wings while I think the work is mine to do.**

- MY CRIPPLED FATHER – my Heavenly Father Whom I have handicapped his movement in my life.
- THE TRAVELING SHOW – my life and ministry.
- THE BROKEN STAGE – a part of my life/ministry in need of repair.
- THE HARLEY – a plan or new idea I try to implement to help repair something broken in my life/ministry.
- OUT OF CONTROL – a Harley can be a useful vehicle, but unless I'm diligent in learning about it and
- maintaining it, it soon begins to control me!

- THE UN-RELAXING COUNTRY DRIVE – At a time when I should be able to relax, I just go faster!
- THE VINEYARDS AND VEGETABLE GARDENS – Could have more...and better than where I am
- now. Instead of slowing down to enjoy the beauty of 1 harvest, calculating how to get more!
- THE SMALL, DIRTY VILLAGE CHILDREN AND ROAMING DEER – These are some of God's favorite creations...and I saw them as possible obstacles. I didn't want to hurt them, but couldn't slow down to ensure their safety.
- THE HOLOGRAM SPIDER WEB – How many times do I rush past something in my life without seeing the deeper things before me. I must slow down to appreciate the grandeur of God's work in my life.
- THE CITY – A busy place with lots of turns and twists, but at least there was some structure that slowed me down long enough to feel some measure of safety.
- THE MAN IN THE GARAGE – His patience with me (and the fact that he neither ridiculed me nor became angry with me), was because he understood my wild ride. Either he had taken the same wild ride and learned from it, or he had taken the time to study the vehicle he used and learned how to maintain it.
- BRICK WALL SHORT-CUT – After my own near miss, I witnessed the peace of a man who was content in his work.
- I WAS THE LEAD DANCER IN THE SHOW – The pressures of my life that put me in the public eye and seduce me into believing I need to act as though everything is always fine...the lie that I can do it all and still smile.
- THE PLAYBOY BUNNY COSTUME – Shows how rude and distasteful my self-sufficiency is!
- THE MINIATURE TOOLS – The size of my own short-sighted, small-minded solutions that I use to fix the broken things in life—when my Heavenly Father has bigger and better tools.
- RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CRIPPLED FATHER:
  - Why did he let me go to all that trouble, in all that danger to get these inferior tools?
    - ◆ Angry that He didn't spare me...from the consequences of my own choices.
  - Why didn't I just ask to use His tools and hear His wisdom on how to fix things.
    - ◆ Angry with myself for not asking for His help.
  - Why don't I ask Him now to help me...?
    - ◆ But with my conditions and my control of what tools we use and how.

9/28/99: Oh Lord, slow me down. Train me to count the cost and ask You for the answers. Teach me the discipline of looking beyond the surface and being satisfied with Your provision. Show me that because of Your grace, I don't have to paint on a smile and wipe away all the tears. Help me, precious Father, to release control of my life and ministry to You.