

Daring Dames



Elizabeth Blackwell



Gina Harvey

January 21st, 2015

By: Shannon Hogan Cohen

We all want to be understood, both of these women are examples of how to be confident with who we are and to never give up hope. These determined dames wanted to achieve a better way of life for others through healing, which in turn provided poise and possibilities within their own lives despite the distractions and dramas of life. The quest is to find our common womanhood through the female fibers that link us all together.

Daring Dames Blog Post #2

At the beginning of each New Year, I set out to better myself and resolve to eliminate (or at least minimize) my unhealthy habits and cultivate healthy ones. While most of my intentions for the upcoming year tend to be about bodily health, my most meaningful ones aim at a deeper kind of well-being.

Women have been healers from the beginning of time. Countless stories have been shared throughout history. We use these tales as blueprints to map out connections within our own personal matrices of the mind and body, as well as guidance from our friends and family. Our predecessors gave us insight on how to refine our mental, spiritual and emotional habits which routinely influence our physical ones. It is in our best interest to pay attention.

Elizabeth Blackwell, born in 1821, was the first female medical doctor in the United States. While rejected by many schools, she was eventually admitted to Geneva Medical College in New York, but not without controversy for being a woman. Every possible obstacle was thrown her way, but she refused to resign. An eye infection she encountered while studying abroad prevented her from becoming a surgeon due to the resultant glass eye. This obstacle may have hindered her dreams but personal perseverance allowed Ms. Blackwell to reframe her goals. She tolerated ridicule regarding her desire to learn medicine, but eventually proved herself as a famous obstetrician and leader in the field of medical science.

Elizabeth proved to humanity that the power to change the world lies within you, not within societal standards. She challenged both the medical world and society's ideas about women becoming physicians, and made an enormous impact on the world of medicine. She opened an infirmary for women and children and eventually founded a medical college for women to learn and grow. She is my candidate to be considered our first Mother of Medicine.

Most of us are familiar with the actual concept of another mother - Mother Nature. Allow me to introduce my nominee for Mother Nurture - Gina Harvey, born 1971 in San Diego. Working in the cosmetic industry and later becoming a licensed aesthetician, Gina always wanted to help women feel good about themselves. A shared symptom among women had Gina constantly questioning the benign concept of covering up skin concerns with creams and makeup. "I found myself spending hours at the library mesmerized by books on skincare, nutrition and wellness," Ms. Harvey pointed out. The pragmatic prescription she often offered to her clients was this: healing the body at a deeper level - on the inside. This in turn helped restore their skin and more importantly, they felt better.

She struggled with balancing heartfelt recollections of her grandmother who came from the generation of antibiotics, and her mother's impact with new medicinal practices through foods and different cooking methods. The variance in her upbringing and her own philosophies caused Gina to question the "old ways" of healing the body.

It was not until years later when her sister-in-law and childhood best friend was diagnosed with cancer at age thirty-five did her passion to delve deeper into nutrition and traditional medicine mount. From her earlier experiences in the skin care field, Gina understood the idea that "covering up" our skin, health, or pain was the wrong tactic. She enlightened those around her with these six words, "in time it will eventually surface." She is not a licensed medical practitioner, but has the life experience that could afford her a doctorate behind her name. She has worn the doctor and caregiver cap countless times in her life. Gina has mentioned many times the importance weaving the concept of the mind, body and soul connection into all facets our lives. In reflecting upon the loss of her best friend, Gina always looked at what was best for strengthening the soul and aiding her friend, not always weakening the disease.

There is a "mother nurture" in most, if not all of us. We are continually taking care of everyone. The difference is that many of us slip when it comes time to provide the attention, care and treatment to ourselves. Gina is a natural giver of life, who encapsulates mind and body collaboration. She utilizes a distribution technique that nourishes both those around her and herself by integrating natural elements of wellness on all levels. Her spirited soul represents the "true woman healer."

Striving to understand our mind and body connection is a wonderful way to lengthen your life. With Elizabeth Blackwell exploring new medical techniques in the 18th century and

Gina Harvey pioneering unconventional ways of thinking about alternative medicine in the 21st century, our female fibers continue to link and be understood. The most important contribution from each of them is their various skills and talents in the betterment of others.

The quality that both of our Daring Dames share is the spirit of personal inquiry, dedication to their cause and, most importantly, their contributions to the healing arts. They both delivered, and continue to deliver, countless hours of hope, treatment and care in educating others by either offering remedies in home or in a professional medical setting. Both Gina Harvey and Elizabeth Blackwell have overcome others misconceptions and misunderstandings about their ideas of medicine in our society. Yet each found a way to study various treatments and make every effort for individual improvement by achieving their personal purpose in different ways.

Life is a delicate dance of finding balance within ourselves, without a predictable path. I have found in my own life it is often the power of the mind that can truly push the body to do incredible feats of strength. Both ladies have taught me to pay attention and take preventive medicine for my soul, and to have faith in the intertwinement of modern treatments. This must be a conversation that many of us should have together this year: unraveling nature's secrets and finding the courage to chart our own optimal health objectives. Today in medicine there are unlimited opportunities, to intertwine both the conventional and nurturing path, which would appear to be the best place to begin. As Elizabeth Blackwell so eloquently states, "Love, Hope, and Reverence are realities of a different order from the senses, but they are positive and constant facts, always active, always working out mighty changes in human life."

Let's pay attention to ourselves this year by strengthening our souls and perhaps our body will require less from us. Let's make it a healthy year, our bodies and minds may respond **accordingly**.

Dame Dialogue – Part of the Daring Dame's mission is to absorb the lessons together through the subject matter offered on this blog. Your voice and personal perspectives are essential. We can discuss our own life experiences, connect with history, and self-reflect around each other's shared stories.

Please engage and contribute your personal reactions by submitting your comments at:

<http://www.daringdames.org/blog-commentary.html>

Thanking you in advance for your input through your thought provoking views and responses. I understand not everyone will comment, but perhaps at some point you will leave a comment.

Your participation is unique, as we are the sum of our collective experiences.