

Lions in our Lives – by Lorelei Pepe

We all have conflict and trouble in our lives. No one goes unscathed. Growing up in our cozy home in Brooklyn, my mom tried to protect us kids from a lot of trials and tribulations – life lessons we all have to learn. However, I felt like she kept us, particularly me, in a bubble, and life was all rosy. I used to tell her she viewed the world **“through rose colored glasses”** and she would just laugh.

I found out life to be much different than that when I graduated from my fashion college in NYC at the young age of 19. I worked day and night for 2 years and even attended college in the summer. But when I would pound the streets looking for my first job I found out how difficult it was going to be. My potential employers, all men, were pretty sharp and like **“sharks”**. They were tough, but smooth talking and convinced me to turn over my portfolio so they could check it out. Little did I know they would steal ideas and I learned what the term “knocking off” meant, real fast. It took awhile but I “wised up.” I was not used to this world, but through faith and determination I prevailed.

I went through many design jobs during my 10 year stint in the fashion business. I loved it but never made it big and stuck it out as long as I could. I think David in the Bible sums it up – **Psalm 57:4 “My soul is among lions, I lie among the sons of men who are set on fire and whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongue a sharp sword.”**

When I was living in Florida and in my 40’s I was once again unemployed. My last company had folded and gone out of business much to my dismay and disappointment as I so enjoyed it there. But now I was older and work was harder to find. I kept hearing I was overqualified and was out of work for 9 months. I was desperate and depressed and was willing to do anything! So one day I answered an ad in the paper for a telemarketing job in the communications industry.

Having no experience, I had to start at the bottom, despite my age and I worked part-time in a call center for a company called Pagenet – they sold beepers, which was the rage at that time. I had to share a desk with a young fellow in the morning as I worked from 9-1 and he came in for the afternoon. I was required to make at least 3-4 sales contacts in one day. I was very pressured and felt like a wreck most of the time but persisted. I managed to find leads on my own and scour the paper for potential customers too. I worked hard. Most of the people there were a lot younger – in their 20’s and liked to socialize more than work! But I was determined to make it work.

I prayed to God for help daily and to help me endure. I was fearful, and anxious but after 6 months I was promoted to full time and got my own desk! Three months later, I got to work in a larger, more private area with just 4 people. I had become accepted by then and developed a nice rapport with the younger salespeople too. Some actually asked me for advice. A year later I was promoted again and then in charge of the department. However more responsibility and a promotion and raise did not come without much anxiety.

I remember that on Sunday nights I would get apprehensive thinking about the coming work week and could not sleep well. But I kept my fears to myself, except for praying to God. Talking with Him and reading my Bible, helped comfort me. I trusted Him and He helped me overcome my fears.

So, I worked there successfully for a few years and learned to relax and enjoy it as it was a high pressure job, but I knew God had my back during the tough times. He was with me every step of the way.

I look back now and think the Lord gave me a sense of peace, grace and wisdom. I became braver and He tamed all the lions in my life too. I give Him all the honor for helping me persevere.

We all have “**lions**” in our lives, but when we turn it over to God, He will handle them. We are not alone, although at times we think we are, and think we can handle the situations. But I am a witness to the fact that the Lord will come through for His faithful believers and followers. Through Him I can be an overcomer and be victorious. **Praise God for that!**