

## The Strength of Woman Inspires Strength in a Man

John Gehring  
August 2022



At the Upshur House, during the Washington Monument campaign, I had one of those special heart-to-heart showdown prayers. With utmost intensity, I pleaded, demanded, beseeched God to give me the confidence, the faith and the strength to do the important things I felt called to do. The prayer ended in a peaceful quiet and my inner voice responded with an acknowledgment.

I walked away from that prayer with an understanding that God had accepted it. The inner voice inside me whispered, "Confidence will come through a step-by-step process. A time of trials lies ahead."

### Building Confidence

I was assigned to the MFT just days after the September 18, 1975 event and met a world where challenging yourself and being challenged were a part of everyday life. To grow, I had to work on my heart, my attitude and patient endurance so as not to give up during those periods when nothing seemed to go right.



As an MFT fundraiser, I had a slow start. I was on teams in the Los Angeles area and found it hard to make the kind of result I hoped for. When my confidence was at a low point, I was assigned to a traveling team led by Steve Sechrist.

It was a very good team and I started to offer up better results. A renewed confidence came with the results, but challenges remained. And that is where my hero Jean Jonet came into my life.

Captain Jean was a good leader and a great person. Somehow, she saw more in me than I saw in myself. I joined her team in Denver and fulfilled a high monthly monetary goal (of \$200 a day), in part because of the confidence she inspired. In Denver, the fundraising proved hard for me. I fell far behind the pace needed to reach my monthly goal. As days passed, it was getting increasingly difficult to realize the results I needed. My confidence was shrinking.

Seeing this, Jean sat me down and went on to share an optimistic insight with me. "In some parts of Colorado one could make with the right conditions, \$60 an hour selling mints!" She wanted me to have that kind of "unbelievable" experience. She believed in me and she understood something about how the spiritual world can offer us help. Her encouragement was received but her words seemed like a dream beyond my reach.

Through Jean's words and support, I gained confidence that my poor start would not prevent me from making my goal. Soon after our team left Denver and hit the road, we found the kind of area and people that could turn fundraising into something very special. Our hard work was accompanied by an attitude of appreciation and our results gradually improved.

As we approached the last weekend of the month, we looked at the numbers. Though I was doing much better, the gap to achieve a \$200 average required me to make \$1,200 on the last three days. Outside of Christmas, I had never had a single day's result of more than \$300. How could I do it? Jean broke it down to the numbers. I needed to average \$400 a day, including a traditionally slow Sunday. "John, here's how you do it, Jean shared. Make \$400 on Friday, \$600 on Saturday and \$200 on Sunday." That became "our" plan.

Like a prophetess, she shared that I would make \$60 an hour with chocolates in a parking lot on Saturday. I discovered that for myself that Saturday. I felt I was being used by heaven to collect the material blessings that the people felt moved to offer.

Sunday was the last day of the month and we were going to make a long trip back to Denver. It seemed possible to reach our goal but the day was rather slow, nothing like the day before. We were all rather tired and pushing when we reached the town's last set of bars. In the last remaining bar, still short of the goal and nearing the last customer, a voice shouted out, "How much for the bucket of flowers!" I replied \$47 as that was what I needed to make my monthly goal. With no more customers left, I prayed. The man looked at me and then at the remaining flowers in my bucket. He nodded to show agreement.

As I left the bar, and my final flowers with the man, I realized that my goal was accomplished. Somehow, God had used me and Jean to create a unity where blessings could come. Through the power of unity, our whole-hearted effort and a willingness to continue till the end, we learned something precious about the nature of God's love and our own power to be a difference maker - a valuable lesson that has helped me throughout my life