

Flashback  
By Sarah Simmons

*Chapter One*  
The Answer

Life is full of little twists and turns. The road is mighty crooked with many precipices on the way. I have been lucky I didn't fall from the cliff a few times. But then I think Lady Luck has my back covered. It could be she even saves me from time to time.

In fact lately I have seen a few signs that imply she is interceding to stop the chain of negative events that I have lived for quite some time. I definitely think she will overpower the negative forces riding forefront in my thoughts and actions, and bring on a change that will empower me.

My nose is itching which is a definite sign that good luck or money is on its way. That means I must be on guard and be really careful with some of my negative thinking. I sometimes wonder if I don't block my luck with my martyr thoughts. You would never know it but I think I should be punished for things I have done that I shouldn't have done.

While I don't expect you to know such things, believe me, Lady Luck knows. She often implores me to let go, let loose, let God. For the life of me I want to but some unseen forces that are stronger than her ability to help have me entrapped in veins of putty. Now wouldn't it be great if it were veins of pure gold? I have heard tell there is gold dust in the air but have yet to see evidence of that fact. But then maybe I am also blinded by negative thinking and beliefs. I mean, how can you see something if you doubt it is there?

Why on earth would anyone secretly think they should be punished? Is that evidence of worthiness issues? For the life of me I don't recall specifics of why I should be punished. I just have little twinges of self hatred that seem to precede each bad string of luck I have. Plus I often entertain destructive thoughts that seek to bring me down just when I am getting on my feet. These events are like a slap in the face when I least expect it.

In a way though I always expect it; such a paradox to think and feel that way. The ways of the mind they do confuse and confound me. Are destructive thoughts a way I keep myself on the ground; perhaps an example of “shooting myself in the foot?” Some say I am actually afraid of the responsibilities of success. That could be a fact but I am not inclined to wholeheartedly accept that belief. You see I lack clarity about just what success is. Seeing how it means one thing to one person and something else to another I believe I need to understand what success means to me before I embrace it.

My self destructive behavior has a message for me to process but I must first confront my beliefs about me and life in general or how I fit into life’s big plan. I am afraid of life’s big plan. In fact I am afraid of things beyond the boundary of my childhood experiences. I whisper now so only you can hear me when I reveal I am afraid I am an outsider. I am afraid I don’t fit in. Something is wrong with me but I don’t know exactly what it is unless it is the fact I am poor white trash or so one of my classmates said. Oh, don’t tell anyone I am poor white trash. They might not even give me a chance at all. I reckon I could use a friend to help me a bit rather than choose ones that reject because me because I am poor. I can’t exactly explain how the trash became part of my description unless it means I am no good. I tell you one thing for sure I have a very good heart. At least I am willing to give Sarah that.

Some of my behavior must be clues to a truth I have yet to admit or even fully understand. Somewhere there is a connection, a tiny little link in all my failures that in fact may be a big link. If only I had a formal education I would have studied psychology and be more in tune with the way I think. It helps to understand the mind if you have a few clues; like a roadmap of how the mind works. Could it be if you are poor white trash that an education doesn’t matter anyway?

Nonetheless armed with such understanding then perhaps I could head some of these hard times off at the pass. I believe the point wherein I begin to read my own press clippings; negative though they may be, is a good place to start.

Have I gotten more attention with my failures than I would have received with my successes? Is the “pity party” my way of insuring I am noticed? Whoa, I don’t like those thoughts. What puzzle does this clue fit into? Is life really “hard” for me or is it simply my perception; my approach that makes it appear so very hard? Is life unfair to me or is

that my way of excusing my failures, and ignoring my bullheaded approach to all situations? Am I one of those people that would rather do it my own way even if I fail than listen to a fresh approach?

Ooooh...that truth hurts my heart and brings tears to my eyes. If only I could love Sarah. Long are the hours I have peered into the mirror seeking an answer to the mystery of me and why I hate myself. What forgotten memory drives me to hurt her (Sarah) and compels me to sabotage any efforts of a good life?

Mirror, Mirror, on the wall would people think me vain if I shared with them the many hours I spend looking in the mirror seeking answers but finding only vacant eyes? I talk to myself everyday while I get groomed. I ask a lot of questions that my mind doesn't bother to answer. Still I ponder the meaning of my life, and its many ups and downs. Sometimes I believe the mind answers but the brain compartmentalizes the answers if they are too painful for me to know the truth.

Oh! Yes, I have pondered much about the perception that "hard times" builds one's character. Let me tell you in no uncertain terms I have my doubt about that. Were that so, surely I would be approaching sainthood. Now if you said it makes you tough as nails I'd be more inclined to believe it.

I have always been full of questions. For the most part I had to find the answers myself. In those situations where I couldn't find the answer I resolved them by making up an answer rather than have a gaping hole of wondering.

I smile when I recall the thousands of questions I had for Mama. There would have been no time to do her work had she stopped to answer all my questions. Some said it was a way to get my share of the attention with all the kids she had pulling on her every day. I would definitely refute that, though a little extra attention might have come in handy every now and then.

I had questions from the time I began to think. In fact I thought of questions to ask long before I could speak. Though few would believe a child can do such a thing. Let me further add I often knew right from wrong at a young age though I did not always do the right thing. Is it strange to say sometimes you learn a lot of lessons by doing things wrong? Like I said before; "life is just plain strange and other times confusing".

The many answers that I made up served to satisfy my curiosity. Surely the answers that I came up with were the answer to something if not the specific question that I had. That kind of thinking launched me on my current quest for knowledge and motivates me to read all the time.

Still I welcome any answer that I get from my many questions. I may as well tell you that I reserve the right to ignore your answer if it doesn't jell with how I think. Yet, isn't that the way all of us handle advice or answers from others? Would you agree that is your way also? I am very stubborn in my approach to things. There are even a few folks that have called me opinionated. It's a good thing Lady Luck doesn't discriminate against stubborn and opinionated people. I would never see her at all.

I am feeling a little on the weak side else I would stay and think out loud some more. To be honest I talk to myself all the time anyway. It is not often that I am open about how I feel. I am more inclined to be serious and a bit mysterious. The genetics I got from my parents and my DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) did not deliver up much humor in my personality. Do you have dry wit or are you serious like I am?

Did you ask a question about DNA? According to my understanding DNA is the blueprint of any and all things that can ever be experienced or expressed. That includes your particular physical characteristics and personality, as well as all of nature's creations. Of course your parents will definitely pass along their particular traits in your inherited genes.

Still and all they come from what I understand is master blueprints of all that can be ever be created. Not that it is a good time to go into such complicated explanations; especially since I have only partial understanding. How can I be expected to know so much if the scientists are still poking around in the genome (I just love that word)( all information in the genes) landscape? That point being made I will tell you what I can in the context I am currently living through my journey of recall.

To be sure I am looking for clues, answers, signs; anything to help me get out of this situation or at least live through it. Do you see I have not given up hope yet, nor thrown in the towel? You may have surmised I am a fighter, albeit a stubborn one. Do you reckon you can be a great fighter if you aren't stubborn? Is it possible the stubborn quality is what enables me to tap into perseverance?

Oh Yeah! I must be more explicit and complete thoughts so as not to confuse you or myself also, for that matter.

The RNA (ribonucleic acid) activates specific DNA blueprints. Such activation determines how you react to things. As you can well imagine it's quite complex. If you remember I said even the scientists are still seeking answers about the blueprints stored within our DNA.

Haven't you ever wondered why some things come so easy and natural for some folks while others struggle with the same issues or skill sets? I believe the answer lies, at least partially, in the DNA and RNA relationship. Have you ever heard life is all about relationships? I head that saying many times but only now in the oddest moment do I get it. Even in the genes there are relationships!!! I am happy in the saddest of times. What a brief, though welcome respite.

I bet you are like me in that you thought the mind does not wander in its musings when you are dying. I have learned the most inopportune way the mind keeps on churning thoughts, only it goes on a backward journey with no plans for tomorrow and no hopes to make things right. Have you noticed any unusual thoughts I am sharing? Did I tell you I am living a lucid dream? Do you know what a lucid dream is? That's a situation where you watch yourself living but you are detached. Or in this instance am I watching my death review? You are seemingly unable to interrupt the dream or your behavior. I want to stop the wheel from spinning and get off but don't know how. Have you ever heard of anyone defying death?

What's that you say? You want me to complete the idea about RNA and DNA? Wouldn't it be magnificent if we could, at will, change our DNA pattern by conquering the power or harnessing the reins of the RNA? Do you think you would abuse that power? It might bring a screeching halt to cosmetic surgery. I confess I would be tempted to change a few, no many, of my physical characteristics. On second thought I don't know if I am worthy to wield such power for I would seek to benefit without regard to my overall growth and evolution. Such thinking must reflect a lack of gratitude for what and who I am. Not to mention it likely shows I am vain and shallow. Boy, that is brutal truth, isn't it?

If it sounds like I am complaining about my lack of humor since my DNA dished up more than my share of will power, allow me to reassure I am not. Or is it the RNA that dishes it up? If so, I wonder what makes the RNA talk? What triggers it into action?

Lord, I need an education along about now. I read somewhere there are miles of DNA inside us. That being so, then how does the RNA know when to stop, and share a bit of the information inside our programs? Did I say programs inside the DNA? Is that possibly true? Is it possible everything about anything is in the DNA? If that is so, just how does one access the everything and the all? Better still how does one change what one is already accessing? Like... what you are living along about now. I know there is a message here. I just can't read the language. Since I can't read the language it is unlikely I will change my program or my circumstances without some type intervention.

Perhaps it is possible to stumble upon it. I've got a lucky rabbit's foot. I have the Feng Shui money frog. I've got the lucky helpers already. I believe! It's going to happen any day now. Then...pray tell me why one day turns into another ...and another... and it has not yet occurred. Pure and simple I believe the answer can be traced back to a lack of clear vision and faith.

I suppose I should make myself more clear about the point I made earlier when I referenced the information contained within our DNA. How on earth would I know such a thing? Is it something physical that takes place inside us or is it chemical that brings up the information in the DNA? Are they somehow interrelated? There goes that issue about relationships. Is there a physical, emotional and chemical trigger combination that triggers the RNA to activate DNA encoding? All these questions but not enough answers to suit me. You can probably see now why Mama got aggravated with me asking all those questions constantly; can't you?

Like I told my sister the other day we all get an ace in our deck of cards we are dealt to play the game of life. That ace is registered in the DNA and is what you must use as your edge in life. I firmly believe I got a double dose of will power in my DNA. That might make me have two aces in my deck of cards. I think you can also be lopsided with too much of one characteristic and not enough of another. It's that thing everybody calls balance.

No matter things are what they are. Though all of us have got to believe we have some free will and can at least make some changes. You would need a blow torch to interrupt my will power. Given the choice between will power and humor I would likely choose will power as my ace from the deck of life's cards. Probably that is because I know a little about will power having used it so much whereas humor is unfamiliar to me. It takes a lot to make me laugh.

It makes me nervous when folks try to get too close to me. I simply think it serves me better if folks don't get too deep inside my head. I ignore those that say I should lighten up and laugh a bit. How would they like to laugh when they are hungry or one step away from losing everything?

Does it bother you if folks get too close to your skeletons in the closet? Could it be you have no secrets or insecurities? Honestly, with all due respect, I doubt that to be the case. I mean if you are perfect what have you to learn on this Earth? It is likely you would be on the next Star Gate passage out of here. I heard tell that is called death.

I believe you would avoid it like I am trying to do if you thought of the unknown factor, like potential death, involved with going through a Star Gate. You may have also heard of Star Gates as worm holes in space. I tell you I believe they exist. You may even discover that worm holes can be discovered or entered by bending space. I can't tell you why I make such a statement but I feel it to be a fact. I won't argue with you as to whether I have a few bats in the belfry but I stick by my beliefs like flies on a honey paper.

Now don't go thinking I am judging you, perfect or imperfect. I am not worthy of making such judgments. Dumb or ignorant I may be in some aspects, but I am wise enough to know I am unqualified to wield the power of judgment for one's attainments if it is involved with after death experiences. You might say I am looking for comfort by validating that someone can relate to my feelings in this unknown territory I find myself cruising within.

I would be lying to you if I said I never judge others. I am only in the phase of catching myself as I judge others and then applying the brakes of judgment when I can. I am ashamed to reveal I am not always entirely successful. Does it count for anything that

I am working on tempering my judgments and reactions to the behavior of others? I know I have suffered often and plenty when others judge and reject or avoid me.

My Daddy always told us kids that what you judge another to be is really you looking at yourself. According to his thinking you can not see in another person anything that is not awakened in you, whether it is good or bad. Do you believe my Daddy had it right when he made such assertions?

I could tell those that judge me harshly many things but what is the ultimate purpose of doing so? Am I cynical when I think most folks don't really care and the rest are actually happy to hear of my drama? But then few have known about my situation so I should be more kind in my thinking towards them; shouldn't I? If I am being honest I judge myself more harshly than anyone else can ever do. Are you that way with yourself? Don't you think we might judge others in an attempt to learn who and what we truly are?

Maybe that is why some people are reserved when in the presence of others. While I definitely want to keep others at bay I often poke around inside my head looking for clues to how my mind works. Armed with the knowledge of psychology I could get inside my own head for sure. That's no doubt in my mind about that fact. Is this one of those situations where a little knowledge but no wisdom is dangerous to have? If so I am in trouble; big time.

More than likely I am there any way even without my conscious awareness. It's probably safe to say it would be more difficult to compartmentalize my issues. I am very curious where the line between thought and feeling is, and exactly where they are linked. Are you at a place in your life that you have the game figured out? Just when I think I have mastered a rule I run into a situation wherein the rules seem not to apply.

I have heard that knowledge can liberate you at times and other times imprison you. I often wonder if we are a prisoner of our own thoughts. Is it possible that is true? Do you think that is a deep subject? Is it deep enough to drown in? Those type questions are not always answered by me.

Do our insecurities serve as vehicles to keep us imprisoned in our thoughts; the ones that are the same? I often try to avoid thinking on some issues only to find myself right back is a stream of thoughts that I am best served to ignore or squash. Have you ever been powerless to interrupt thoughts that might unnerve or drive you crazy? How

did you handle the situation? More to the point; how did you react to the attempt to avoid certain thoughts?

This might sound crazy but I swear to you there have been times when my thoughts seem to “beat me up”. Have you ever experienced being overwhelmed by your negative thoughts? I declare to you that my thoughts have been my best friend and my worst enemy. That said, I can’t afford such friends, or phrased another way; I don’t need an enemy because one lives inside my head.

Do you think that is how people become self destructive? Please, I entreat you not to be exasperated by my many questions. I really want to know your point of view. Of course most of us seek to be understood. Though I often think that is an attempt to be validated by others when you seek understanding of another.

If I am honest with myself I also realize some people take offense when you ask opinions and then ignore them if they don’t support your own view. Maybe that is what free will is all about. Or perhaps individuality is more accurately representative of one’s viewpoints.

Back to my earlier reference to issues with debt and facing the responsibility of it. I know for sure there have been times I was drowning in a sea of debt but a sea of thoughts is something I have to come to grips with. Is drowning in anything besides liquid a sign you are in over your head?

Do you think that question is indicative of the truth that here in this moment I am in over my head in something besides debt? I know something is up but I seem to have partially compartmentalized the facts. Could it be that I am in a series of thoughts that haunt me while they elude the radar of recognition?

I believe the truth surfaces sooner or later. My Daddy said if you always tell the truth you don’t have anything to worry about. I ponder whether he knew that a person might lie to oneself.

I sorely regret I was too self-serving to learn much about my parent’s thoughts and thinking. Of course if I were more perceptive I could analyze their philosophies by their behavior and many teachings they imparted to me. If only there was more time I could reflect on some of the defining moments or events in my life when I was under their care and direction.

Alas! My timing seems to be off a bit. Either poor timing or lack of discipline to exert the effort could be part of the reason I haven't desired to know more of them than my memories; always of the same events. Sometimes I believe life is a giant puzzle and the events are likened to individual pieces that seem to go many places but actually fit perfectly in only one place. Have you experienced such lines of thoughts?

Take for instance what I am faced with today; the issue of timing. To say it is an inopportune time to feel faint is an understatement. I am mystified about the sudden feeling I might faint.

I would assign such feelings to fear but there is something more. Though as yet I can not put my finger on it. Just an uncanny sense one of those signs that life's experiences deliver to put you on notice. It can't be my life is over so I won't dwell on that thought...nor should I? Or is it? Have I missed an earlier sign?

Maybe I should lay down for a spell and squelch this incessant chatter; the brain noise; the white monkeys of the mind. My thinking makes me feel cold. Why the sudden sense I am shivering though I don't know if I am cold inside or out. Just a dull sense of freezing; maybe frigid cold. I know it's hot outside. At least it was when I came in from breakfast at the diner. My head hurts and is pounding like a hammer pinging on a nail from all the pressure of my internal dialogue.

I'll take this issue up again when I am rested and feel more at ease. There's plenty of time to turn my life around. I'm going to get a strategy going. Before I do I have to get clear on tactics and strategy. What did Daddy say was the difference between the two? I see the answer out there on the outer perimeter of my awareness but can't bring the interpretation into the brain for processing.

I reckon it's time I listen to others for a spell since most of what I do or have done comes up "snake eyes". What's that you say? Why do you want to know if I lived up to my expectations and complete all my goals? Who is asking such questions? I don't know you so why should I answer your impertinent questions? You look a lot like me but like I said, "I don't know you" so don't go trying to convince me you are my soul or some unknown angel trying to make my acquaintance. It's a little late to save me, don't you agree? Besides how do you save a failure?

I didn't mean to snap you up or sound so harsh. Surely I should be more gracious even in this circumstance. Can't you see my side? Why do things always come up "snake eyes" for me just because I don't have a goal lists? Why would that be a question at a time like this? Now I'll be honest and tell you I don't make a goals list because anything to do with goals implies I might be less than others; which is simply saying maybe there is something wrong with me. It might even reveal I am severely limited in ways of the world, such as being successful and making lots of money. And remember, I don't fit in.

I also believe a goal list is not enough. A time line must be part of any plan, goal, dream or intention you may have. Else the mind may think it has forever to complete what you desire. I am afraid I have hit the brick wall to "forever" and know for sure there is an end to time.

For instance you could find yourself in the same boat I am in today. What regrets would you have? You know...You meant to do a lot of things ...but wait...your number is up. Time gone. No clock will help you now. No calendar will come to fruition. Bitter tea can not compare to the realization of your life ending. Especially if you are filled with regrets as I find that I am. I wish I had read my tea leaves. Would they have warned me the curtain call was near? Could you handle knowing time was drawing to a close? It is more e than you can imagine. My regrets haunt me like a werewolf chasing me in the darkest recesses of regrets; breathing down my back; ready to pounce and get me. Believe me when I tell you that fear is greater than dying. It must be something to do with basic fears of something getting me. Alas "death" is the werewolf now.

Talk about "smallsville" you may discover the meaning all too deeply if you are one of those people that have regrets, but no apparent time to make amends. I would cry but I am not prone to do such a thing. Though cry I would if I believed it was a way out. In this situation there is no time for tears. Realizations are too damning to have the energy for tears. You might say they are a luxury I can not afford. Maybe if you don't have money you can't afford the luxury of time either, especially if the clock is ticking down to time-zero.

Let me think about this situation for me. You want to know what I would do if I had a chance. Are you implying you can intercede with the death march to glory? Given a chance I would definitely make some changes. For sure I would. Make no mistake,

come next week I would make a list of things I plan to do, providing that I somehow cheat destiny and trade my number in for another time. Is there a chance you gave me someone else's ticket to death? I intend to explore the possibility a mistake was made. Is that a goal? Are intentions stronger than goals? How are they the same or how are they different? Is there a relationship between intentions and expectations that is greater than a plan or goal?

To me plans are intentions whereas a goal is something I think is likely beyond my reach. Intentions are more solid anyway because I believe they are a foregone conclusion. With the exception of outside influences such as death you will experience your true intentions. Now the timing might be a while and hard to predict but indeed it will happen.

A goal is not something real to me. I just can't identify with a goal. I never even heard the word until I was an adult, albeit a young adult. My first association with the word was in a ball game and remains so until this very day. I don't play ball so why would I want to reach a goal? It's something foreign that brings up undiscovered insecurities. What if I fall short of the mark of my goal; then I have no more hope. Is hope a weak insurance policy, the one I haven't paid the premium on yet?

Now if I make intentions in my new strategy I am more likely to achieve things because when I make up my mind about something I know I am on target to success. I sense a conflict between what I am selling you: I mean telling you, and what I am living. You can say I succeed at everything I do; sooner or later. I wish there had been more events that occurred "sooner" rather than later. I suppose I should be grateful they happened. But aren't we all guilty of wanting something other than what we have? I mean, are any of us satisfied longer than a New York minute?

Some say you have to put success into context with what you have achieved in life compared to where you started. Still and all I don't feel successful because I focus on my failure all the time. Do you think that is part of the reason I continuously take two steps forward and ten steps backward? If that is so, will I ever get ahead of the curve of failure?

I feel defeated just recalling my many attempts at success only to come up snake eyes. Just in case you wonder what snake eyes is in the context I use it let me just inform

you it means I come up empty handed. When you consistently come up empty handed it means you are one step away from going under or are on the edge of the abyss.

I can never watch any movies that relate to an abyss of any kind because it is too close to home for me to live through. My drama has me on the ground often enough that I rarely see a movie with great drama for I can not handle the pain. I don't need the drama because I am the drama. Would you like to have my drama for a while? I am giving it away free today. Wait a minute didn't I say I would take life anyway I could get it? I suppose the truth slips out in spite of self deception. Success..., success..., success..., how it wearies my soul.

If you have a measuring barometer is success also relative to your past achievement and the present one? Success sometimes comes with a heavier price tag than failure. It may account for the fact folks continue down the same old path though they know failure is just around the bend. Do you think you can become complacent in your situation? Have you ever persisted in actions and thoughts that you knew would lead to failure and/or great pain? Did you try to stop or did you find yourself swept up in some type of flow that was stronger than your will to stop in the moment?

Then you can surely understand what I am talking about and offer up a bit of compassion. Now don't go feeling sorry for me because I want none of your pity. To me pity implies something is wrong with me or that I am less than others. On the other hand a bit of compassion implies you can see I have a troubled heart but am a good soul.

Pity also means I can't get it right so I surely don't want to reinforce that perception considering my confidence is sometimes below the water mark. Just in case you aren't familiar with the water mark just know the water mark means you are within reach of what it is you are seeking. In simpler terms it means you can do it or get the job done. If you are below the water mark it means you are way off mark or have a long way to go. Sometimes it means you have tanked, which is the case with me in the moment, and have no chance at all. I believe they call that state "a snow ball's chance in Hades".

Does the fear of the unknown, even something so promising as success and its platitudes have anything to do with one going down the same old road, and expecting the same old landscape; such as failure? Is repeated failure more learning experiences needed or a form of punishment? Who's to say that failure isn't part of a grand design to make

things dark or dense so that the opposite of light and bright might occur? I maintain you can't have one without the other as some sort of balance but I can't for the life of me tell you why I think such a thing. Now I am not ready to stake my life on such an assertion but I think a lot on those lines of thought.

But then again does one repeatedly fail because of luck or some other intangible, like your RNA interpreter playing the same old song, over and over. What I mean to say is do you think the same old thoughts over and over? I do. I catch myself thinking awful, destructive thoughts about my future. Such awful thoughts I think that I definitely can't afford an enemy. Two minds with my dread filled images could blow my world apart. I sure hope my world is not coming to an end. See what I tell you. I have to be on guard all the time.

You know they say it is not the big things that make or break you, or even sustain you for that matter. It is the little things that one focuses on that your drama revolves on or around. That is probably why some folks seem so small and petty in their thinking. I know I have felt that way and am guilty of judging others to be the same.

Like I figure...most of us are neither totally negative nor totally positive. But we may have a tendency to get in ruts of thought that keep us in the negative groove or if we are really lucky, in the positive groove. Lest you think I am on a pity party or that I think only negative thoughts that is not the fact. I'm just pondering the meaning of why I do or do not change my circumstances when I want to.

As my Mama would say whenever we rambled in our stories and failed to get to the point right away, "you take the long way around the bush to merely say something simple". I guess the fact is I am trying to tell you that I have been down on my luck for so long that I have one foot in the grave but luckily no one has thrown a shovel full of dirt yet. It's a nice way of saying I am knee deep in manure but I can see my way out. There's a rain cloud I see overhead. Let's just hope it washes off the stink of bad thinking or whatever it is that has me in manure.

One of my badges of honor that I wear in spite of my negative thinking is that I am not one to give up. No sir, I ride a dead horse, if I have to, rather than throw in the towel. Even if the horse is dead and rotting I drag the horse with me over the finish line. Now that might be a good thing. Then on the other hand it could be bad. I think that issue

gets into timing and knowing when to hold them and when to fold them. Being stubborn makes me reticent to give up and start over. That foolish pride of mine sometimes gets in the way. Though I tell myself there is no shame in failing if you get up and go again, my actions belie that fact.

Let me tell you the truth for I have made a lot of mistakes on timing. I never learned to play cards. I wonder if a good card player plays the game of life better than I do. After all isn't the ace we get in our deck of cards like playing a card game? Seems I better get more familiar with the 52 cards and their symbols.

It isn't like I haven't bluffed my way through a few things though. Is a "bluff" a true win or is it only delaying the inevitable? On reflection I wonder if those I bluffed won or lost in the circumstances and will they come back for another go at it themselves? Since I heard tell you always meet yourself on the road of life when every thing you do comes on back around to greet you. Will such greetings be like a slap in the face? Will I be on the end I put others on? In other words will we trade places? Or is that on down the road a ways...like on the other side? It seems peculiar to have such thoughts. It is much like knowing more than I am aware of knowing yet lacking the perspective to put it into context and apply it.

I have met myself several times; each time with a different dead horse. I think that implies I've drug around a lot of issues for along time .Would you agree with such? No matter; either way I can't deny the fact or even change the past. Or can I change the past? If so, what would I change first? Would I be the person I am today if I changed a single detail?

I suppose I am shallow enough to want to change my looks first and then my finances. Do you think that choice tells a lot about my priorities? I think it reveals a little more than I wanted you to know about me. If I keep on revealing all my inner thoughts, pretty soon I won't have any more secrets.

A fellow I once worked with said something I recall really often, and even ponder on for long bouts of time; day after day for weeks on end before the thought gets cast aside when another trauma-drama occurs in my life. He said "that when you have a problem that goes unresolved for a long time, eventually the problem fizzles out for a while only to return at a later date with even greater force or challenges". When I quizzed

him for more details because I really couldn't get the meaning he patiently explained that one can only endure the same pressure for a given period of time before it actually kills them. Thus the problem eventually might just "die down" and circle back around again at a later date. Upon its return the issue may change a little but will definitely be harder than before. Furthermore he said repeated failure insures repeated recycling of the issue.

When I shared with him that I always complete my issue even if I ride the dead horse over the finish line, he disagreed with me that I won anything. He thought my biggest problem was I carried the horse. He thought I was too dense to "fold them", much less recognize I had lost. In other words he thought I had my priorities skewed. He said, "you can pay someone to transport a horse, so why break your back?"

You know I couldn't see his point then but I finally got it, just as I am sharing this fact with you. At the time I believed he was audacious as to suggest I beat myself up by carrying the horse. He went even further than that. He suggested I was a martyr and used my dramas for attention. I was plenty angry with him when he asserted I would get less attention if I was successful.

To add insult to injury he laughed as he sniffed the air and looked around for buzzards ready to land on the carcass of my dead horse. I was too incensed at the time to get his point. He maintained it is easy to live with myself by blaming failure when in fact it masks my lack of belief in me. Now that is a little too close to the truth for me. I confess I had too much pride to admit the truth to him so I reacted in a very indignant way to deflect my true insecurities. Though I doubt if I fooled him for a moment. What do you think? Could you see through my charade?

No matter, I now realize he knew much more about me than I care to admit. Do you have a difficult time facing your character flaws? Believe me when I tell you I puffed my way right past many accusations from others about my character flaws. What was the statement so popular in the 1960's about never letting anyone see you sweat? Well, I never like anyone to see me sweat or cry. There are some things you are best served to keep private. Still... I believe the truth seeps out in other ways whether someone sees you sweat or not.

Take for instance, right now; I've been riding a dead horse for longer years than I care to say aloud. Giving up is not in my nature. That's not to say that being smart is in

my nature just because I hang on long after there is any sign of life. I see that my foolish pride of failure sought comfort in the honor of carrying the horse when the horse was never the story or the point.

Maybe I stink like a rotting carcass too, since a lot of folks give me a wide berth when they pass me by. On the other hand it could be they wish to avoid failure. I hear tell people smell failure. It could be they feel it. After all don't groups of angry folks sometimes create a riot? Energy is catching; contagious. I hope folks don't catch my desperation.

Take for instance I have intended to get out of debt for nine years and I am pretty close to there. My intentions are like my will power. They are my swords of power though I must admit the blade is likely very dull from much swinging about and no sharpening of the blade.

What I am trying to say is I haven't learned anything from my experiences since I am constantly repeating them. I only have to learn to wield them correctly so I am consistent in my efforts. Hey, maybe I should take lessons to learn to wield the sword. See... I have a bit of humor in me, after all. I should probably sharpen the blade first, like... change my approach to things.

Have you ever ridden a dead horse? Do you understand why someone would carry a dead horse about rather than try a different approach? Can you relate to any of my issues? Isn't it strange how human beings seek comfort from others who have suffered in a similar fashion? Logic would dictate that one never wish others to suffer...or do they wish upon others what they are experiencing so they will not walk alone? Is that what it means when people say misery loves company?

I once had a friend that wanted me to be depressed if he was depressed. I certainly thought him selfish to want me to swing my legs off a cigarette paper with him. Now that is down low. However, have you guessed I am down that low today? You could say all my regrets have weighed me down but I believe I am troubled to fear my time is up. I have complained bitterly about my circumstances but I can reassure you that I will take life any way I can get it, along about now. Until today I had not realized what a complainer I am. Now that is a big discovery for one that prides herself on being

mysterious. Didn't I say earlier that the truth seeps out in ways that go largely undetected or so it seems?

There are some things you have to manage or do alone. For instance I believe death is a trip you take alone. What do you think? The exception might be where a group of people die in a catastrophe. I must not sink into the state where I am miserable because I understand misery loves company. Don't you think that is simply an example of energy seeking its own kind? I wonder what kind of energy death has. Surely death, like all other things, has its own particular frequency or energy. Have you given that much thought? If you ask my opinion I believe I am putting a lot of energy and thoughts into death along about now. Could it be there is something significant about that fact? Or do you believe it's simply a coincidence?

Do you think I use my intentions in the right way since they only help me make it through the hard times? I never seem to get ahead of the hard times. Is perchance my thinking style skewed? Or is it the content of what I think that keeps me close to where I was yesteryear, just a wispy breath away from failure all the time?

I think I got a tiny clue; a ray of light shined through my situation, and got past the guard of fear. I fear I think of nothing but survival, and survive I have done. Alas! I see I have no thoughts beyond getting out of trouble. I am going round in circles in my thoughts and my experiences. I use the same old approach with the same tired level of thinking and get the same dull experiences; trying though they are.

I just had a revelation. Maybe there's something to having a plan. But does a plan take you from living in the moment to tomorrow? I've tried really hard these past few years to live in the NOW. I reckon if you are living you are in the now. I think it could be that your thoughts are the ones that are all over the board, that roadmap of DNA I spoke about earlier. What if life is only thoughts and nothing else? Frightening to me I must say. What if thoughts are all there is and there is nothing else? What if your experiences are merely a thought that is protracted and keeps you focused there? How can you travel trillions of miles through your DNA for endless possibilities unless you ride the horse of thoughts? Isn't tomorrow only a thought you had before? If so, is tomorrow really yesterday? Complex to say the least.

I think I'll get on back to mundane living; blessed though it is and concentrate on changing some of my thoughts whether they be today, yesterday or tomorrow. Perhaps a good place to start with changing yesterday, or is it tomorrow, is to change my thoughts. That includes thoughts of me developing some strategies that help me get my act together.

Wait...Wait...Wait...is it tactics or strategies I need to develop to get my act together? Have you ever been befuddled? How did you get beyond that stage? Even more intrusive in your privacy; have you ever thought you might be dying? Did you wonder if you were hallucinating? I can tell you I wish I was.

Maybe the twilight zone is up ahead and I will find my way out of this in the curve. You know I read some place that changes occur the easiest if you approach things from an angle when it is preceded by a curve. I am trying with all my might to look upon the radar screen to learn why. I know it was something to do with forces of energy but I just can't quite get my mind around that truth this minute. You see my mind seems to have a mind of its own ...or is that will of its own. Either one could be the case because I appear to have lost control of my thoughts, actions and reactions.

I always get more clarity when I talk aloud. I have a vivid imagination so it's fairly easy for me to imagine myself doing something but I have to buy into what I am doing; else it doesn't work. In fact I know I actually imagine each thing I consider doing. I have watched myself dream before. They call that lucid dreaming. I hope I am dreaming now or suffering delusions.

Heck, I'll even agree to a quick trip in the Twilight Zone if it signifies I will awaken to life and living again. Don't go presuming that is off the chart thinking. It gives my mind something to latch onto no matter how far fetched it appears to be.

It takes a lot of concentration to think new and different thoughts. It's hard to admit you have a part in your own failure much less accept the fact that you are totally responsible for all your suffering. I tell you I have trouble digesting that fact. Would it make you angry if you realized you created all your challenges, and resulting pain and failure? Can you buy into that philosophy?

Since I am always playing "catch up" my new thinking must include some bigger dreams. Now that I think about it I don't ever imagine me out of debt nor do I see any

money in the bank. Is that realization lucid thinking or sobering thoughts? I don't drink and I have never been drunk. While I can't rule out lucidity I can say I am not drunk; sober nonetheless.

I wonder if the sins of the father are visited on the children in the DNA with images of poverty, lack and struggle. I often ask myself if my cycles of plenty and none are similar to the annual cycles of planting and harvesting of food by my parents. My friend says you draw more energy of the kind you have. If that is so I am unlikely to ever draw much money for my folks had very little. On a relative scale perhaps I am destined to have little.

Now that's not pity that you hear. I am only thinking out loud. If my past destines the future then the road map is clear. There is a lot of suffering up ahead. My folk's major focus was having a good crop and feeding the kids. Oh! Yeah, keeping a roof over their head was a big thing to them, too. I might try getting in touch with the RNA to see if I can take a detour from these cycles so familiar, so predictable, that I live.

There comes that issue of no education again. I can at least buy a book on biology to read it instead of philosophy and religions all the time. For that matter I could even buy a book on psychology to learn a bit about my mind. At least I think I can learn about DNA and RNA in a biology book.

Before going on a new learning tangent it would probably do me good if I imagined a little more success rather than how I will handle my creditors when they call. Maybe that new way of handling life is part of the changes just about to happen in my life. Maybe that is why Lady Luck has come to call...or is it her? I must resist the urge to fear that I am dying. I haven't seen a distinct sign...or have I? If I am dying the creditor can call the other side for me. Should I refuse to take the call or would that be unkind seeing how I owe so much?

Why is my mind a blank; all of a sudden? Did the tape of thoughts stop? Will they resume on the same frightening thoughts? Have you ever tried, in a crucial moment, to recall something of great significance only to have your mind "jell" into a blank? Is that as frightening to you as it is to me?

Did I tell you I go off on lots of tangents? Eventually I get to where it is that I am going. You know; sooner or later as they say. How do you share your experiences? Are you a person that gets right to the point?

Like I told you earlier I don't have all the answers and ignore many that I get but I did listen to one this week that I am going to put a lot of thought into. Providing, of course, there is more time. My friend told me I live in a little bitty concentric ring of experiences. In her opinion I think only to make enough money to get by on when I could think bigger. According to her if I think bigger thoughts my life will reflect the bigger thoughts by changing my circumstances into better and bigger experiences. Can your mind change your death date? Do you think there is anything to what she said or is she blowing smoke?

According to her it takes the same energy to think big as it does to think small. She insists she knows how I think by what I have or what I do not have. Now she didn't say she was a mind reader; you know one of those psychics that tell you not to cross the street tomorrow or something like that. What she did say was, "tell me the thoughts you have and I will tell you your future".

That's big, if not a tall promise. For real, she insisted we create our environment with our thoughts. Change your thinking; change your life is her motto. Doesn't her way of doing things sound so simple? She brought me an entire agenda (her words) to follow. I don't have an agenda. I just deal with life as it comes up. Is that a clue, a sign about my repeated failures? Do you think I am never prepared because I have no agenda? Isn't that what the big people in the world use? Remember I am just a farmer's daughter living in a small world.

I read once that without a road map you do not know where you are going. Even more surprising is that without a road map you do not know where you are on life's highway. To top it off it she concluded by saying, "without a roadmap you do not even know you are lost".

That being even marginally true then I best take another look at that agenda my friend made for me. She says it is a roadmap to success, one she uses all the time. Yeah, like she wasn't born with a silver spoon in her mouth. It is likely the sins of her father are having lots of money because according to her she has always had plenty of money.

Maybe that's her DNA talking or her ace in her deck of cards. Could be her DNA and RNA are on the same page.

Still, you can't exactly argue with the facts. Something she is doing results in money in her life, and something I am doing results in none. It could be something I am not doing. Maybe it's best if I pay more attention rather than feign an interest. Her agenda includes structured meditations wherein I should spend time in thoughts pretending I have money and how I feel about having the money.

The program starts with lots of goals, one of which is plenty of money. Immediately it progresses to exercises wherein I imagine I have lots of money in the bank. I intend to scratch out the word goals and write in plans or intentions. I'll wait until I get home so as not to hurt her feelings.

Can you imagine she said the mind doesn't know the difference between a thought and the real thing? I considered asking her how much she had to drink to make such a statement but am glad I didn't. I don't know everything. It might be wise to be more open to the opinions of others. I should at least evaluate it before I reject it. There is no need to insult someone that is only trying to help me. She was adamant when she insisted I am closed to suggestions from others though I should welcome any help I can get, given my dire circumstances

I didn't tell her then but I sometimes wonder if I reject her suggestions because Mama never let me have things my way. Is that a revelation I should revisit later after I have finish sharing my story with you? It's likely that I will if the good Lord doesn't take me first. There I go again. Thoughts of possible death creep into my thought chains, just trying to shift my focus onto something that I fear.

If fact she thinks things won't change much for me if I don't change how I think. But she felt I better learn to listen first. I can't argue with her since I don't often listen to others and I am entrenched in negative thoughts. Besides, how would she know when she seems to have it all? Maybe listening to the answers of others can be useful. I wish I could accept her words as gospel. I need a little dose of religion. It sure can't hurt, can it?

Could it really be that lots of money, even riches; is just a thought away? Has she given me the answer to all my money problems? I am definitely going to ponder on that very possibility when I lay down. Just let me change my clothes and I will start down the

list by pretending I have money, and see how I feel about that. I hope I am not too dizzy to focus.