

Let Me Give You A Peace of My Mind

Don't Rent Space in Your Head, Evict Negativity

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God's Design

WHEN JOYE ASKED me to write a foreword to her third book I asked "Why?" Her answers are always clear, concise and to the point. "Why not--who knows me better?" she replied.

I couldn't answer that question. I do know Joye in a way perhaps some others may not. Joye has become like a daughter to me, one who is so easy to love. I am aware of her many accomplishments as a medical doctor and I am so very proud of her. I have a mother's pride because that is what I have become. I beam when her bio is being read before she speaks to an audience. They are eager to hear her words and so am I. Many might think she would be haughty or arrogant because of her brilliance. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most, including myself, had never heard of a forensic pathologist medical examiner. Joye is that and so much more. Her accomplishments are countless. She has become a part of my life--the part that touches my heart. She is strong, kind, loving and, generous in word and deed. Joye always makes decisions professionally that are respectful to families and victims. She is just as decisive when she is in her home--she reflects her values and heritage. When she prepares dinner it is a joyous occasion. She always makes sure I get my favorite dessert. Joye is a wonderful mother to her daughter and a doting grandmother to her grandson.

Bentley is Joye's Labradoodle and is an important, supportive member of our family. He was born on my birthday so we celebrate together.

I thank God that Joye came into my life, not by accident but by God's design. When Joye signed her book *My Strength Comes From Within* she signed by writing "Never Give Up!" I will take that advice.

Joye's words will delight and educate you about a few things you might not have thought about lately. I was touched by everything in Joye's book, especially "Sitting at the feet of my Elders." Joye's deep respect for her elders is another of her admirable traits: elders like Momma Hart who taught her not to fret over the things she can't control, but to pray. She learned that lesson well. One day she wandered into the Family Café in Houston. She thought it was by chance that she found herself in the presence of greatness. It was there that she sat at the feet of her elders. Distinguished old friends sat enjoying each other's company. They gladly included Joye in their conversation. One gentleman was a highly decorated veteran and one of the few remaining Buffalo soldiers. Another loved oral history, another was the first African American hired at a local department store. There was an Educator and a veteran of an organization that preceded the formation of the Houston Police Department. Do you think this was a chance meeting? I think it was another one of God's divinely designed meetings to challenge, inspire and encourage.

As you read this inspiring book it will make you smile and say, "Well... that's what was on my mind too."

And don't forget who is at the end of the Bentley's leash!

Sit back and enjoy,
Phyllis Adair Ward

A Beautiful Journey of Life with My Diva Doc (DD)

MANY OF YOU know this author as Dr. Joye M. Carter and some of you know the Dr. Joye but I know my DD, the original, Diva Doctor. NEARLY TOO MANY years ago to count, she came into my life as a mentor and there began a roller coaster ride of this woman as a role model, a sometimes-strict disciplinarian, and (seldom, but witnessed by myself occasionally) an amazingly funny woman. She would do things like send me home if I was not dressed appropriately under her guidelines. To this day I have not forgotten the lesson I learned, causing me to miss out on an outing she planned to take me too. But I showed up dressed inappropriately and had to miss out. I never let that happen again.

Once, she embarrassed me by dancing to her songs in the middle of a designer clothing store aisle. Another incident seems funny now. When DD and I were going to eat breakfast I was having a smart moment with my mouth. She pulled up in front of the restaurant and told me to get out while she parked. As I got out she pulled off and left me there. I, of course, was scared, thinking she was deserting me, but of course there was a lesson in that too.

These are just a few of the many lessons I have learned over the years. There were times when I would resist her advice, but all the while I realized that she was teaching me something out of love that was valuable for daily life.

Many years have passed and I have become the daughter she

never had, and she stepped right in after the sudden death of my mother. Mommy J, as I call her now, is already fine tuning her grandson. He now knows that when he starts anything he must “Never give up,” and he will tell you that is what “my Grammy says.”

As I read the articles, I was able to fit together all the pieces to the puzzle of life and know Mommy J was exposing me to the real world—revealing to me some things to which I was blind. Mommy J has given me a sense of values and as you read each article, whether you know Dr. Joye personally or through her works, reading these articles will allow you to think about choices, and experiences that many of us go through. You will enjoy people lessons of love, laughter, and just a journey through life.

The articles fall in place with society, social media, health, and children. There is something on every aspect of life that you will endure!

I Love You, Mommy J!
Tineace (Tink)

Introduction to Let Me Give You a Peace of My Mind

THIS BOOK IS the third in the series that I began back in 1999. It is a departure from my work topic but not from my sense of observation and continued need to communicate. The title, *Let Me Give You a Peace of My Mind* is definitely a play on words but also a way of getting things off my chest, out of my head and down on paper, giving me the peace of knowing I can share social commentary.

As a medical professional who deals with death on a daily basis I find the need to apply my sense of wonderment to my entire environment. I also have experienced the thrill of having a grandchild in my life and I wanted to leave him a sense of my love through my words.

In my work I “speak for the dead” but in my everyday life I try to speak my mind on any subject that runs through it. I invite you to share this journey of my thoughts which have been gathered in no particular order on a smorgasbord of topics. I hope you can identify with some of my candid views on life and the world I encounter and appreciate my humor as well as my veritable ironic wit.

I wanted to make this a family project and enlisted the aid of my god-daughter who edits my online column and my friends who allow my cynical attitude to permeate our social outings.

I asked my godmother, Phyllis Adair-Ward, to write the foreword because as a published experienced author herself and one of my maternal mentors I can count on her to give me an earnest and honest opinion. I have asked the people who know me best in my private

life to review this collection of articles because they knew me 'when and where' and help keep my feet on the ground while my thoughts soar to depths unknown.

These comments arise from the particular environment where I found myself at the time, whether in a courtroom, in my car, eating in a restaurant or sitting in front of the television. Something's just begging me to wonder why! I was taught to say nothing if you could not say something nice but they never said 'don't write it down!'

I pay homage to my late parents, Russell and Marjorie Carter, for not allowing me to use the word *can't* in my vocabulary and telling me from birth that there was nothing that I could not accomplish with preparation and hard work. To my godparents in Houston, Charles and Patricia Smith, your unwavering love and support have helped to guide me into being the woman that I am today. To Sister, you know the real deal! To Lu, Porti and Al, my girls who keep me smiling. To Tink, a god-daughter is a gift from heaven!

To dog lovers all over, this one is for you too! For you are special people.

To all reading this work, don't forget to take time to smell and enjoy the flowers you come across on the journey to your own destination. When you can laugh at life's situations you can overcome almost anything .

For Goodness' Sake! **At the Feet of My Elders**

I AM OFTEN celebrated for the things I have been able to accomplish in my career. I always give thanks to God who has blessed me my entire life, to my family for instilling my sense of self and human values, and to those people who came before me and began to break down barriers that had been set up to keep people of color from achieving their goals. It is my belief that I would not have been able to reach up if not for standing on the shoulders of those who came before to lay the groundwork for people like me. Too many Black people do not recognize that our elders were there first, and even if they did not accomplish what we, the younger generation, have been able to, they are very much responsible for placing us in a position to have successful lives. It pains me to see younger Blacks ignore or disrespect our elders.

My experience growing up in the Midwest is similar to many of those who grew up in Houston's Fifth Ward. My grandmother was the head of our household after my grandfather passed away. He died at much too young an age from the many years of physical abuse he endured in order to provide a living for his family. I have no problem reminding my friends to this day that if it had not been for my grandparents' influence on my life that I surely would not be where I am today. Little things like knowing the value of a dollar, good nutrition, self-respect, faith in God, common sense, dignity, and hard work are some of the things I learned at the feet of my elders. I believed early

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in life that I was a human being with rights, no matter how the newspaper described me, and others like me, on a daily basis. I knew that my ancestors were kings and queens and that we had developed the science of mathematics and language. I knew at the beginning that Cleopatra did not look like Elizabeth Taylor, and I knew better than to interrupt “grown folks’” conversation. I knew that if a “please” and “thank you” did not follow a “May I,” I was not going to receive a second helping of Momma Hart’s fried chicken.

Unlike some teenagers who grow distant from their families as they mature, I grew closer. My grandmother became my best friend. She was the one person I knew would tell me the truth and keep my feet planted firmly on the ground. She encouraged me to seek a medical degree and ignore that “foolishness” around me in college. This woman with her third-grade education taught me more about life and its consequences than any highly-degreed professor could. I claim that Momma Hart got her degree from the University of “What’s Happening Now” and used her education well. I have never forgotten her recipe for dealing with stress. “You cannot worry about things that you cannot control...just deal with it and learn to pray.” Those words I have chosen to live by. Momma’s gone now, but her memory remains strong.

Until recently, I felt that the connection I had with older people was gone. My hurried lifestyle leaves little time for interesting conversation and even less for being able to meet people who have the time and wisdom to smell the coffee. One day I happened to wander over to the Family Café on Blodgett in Houston’s Third Ward. You see, I am a catfish lover and I needed my “fix” for the upcoming weekend. While at Family’s, I met some of the most delightful Friday lunch companions. I hope they do not get upset when I refer to them as the “grand old men.” When I have an opportunity to see them, I am reminded of the things I learned while at the feet of my elders. These gentlemen are old friends and they can play the dozens with each other in a way that only old friends can who have been through something together. They sure can show our young men a thing or two about maintaining

one's cool. Sometimes they treat me like royalty, getting me water and asking about how I feel outside of the job. Sometimes they say, "Sit down now and listen to this piece of information I have for you," and I feel like I am back at my grandparents' feet.

Who are these "grand old men"? Please let me introduce them to you. First there is Mr. Robert Powell, a retired military man who was one of the first soldiers to integrate the Army during World War II. He served in the 93rd Infantry Division in 1942 and the 9th Infantry Division in 1945. He is a highly decorated veteran hero and one of the few surviving "Buffalo Soldiers" who served under General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He was born in the state of Louisiana in 1924 and had a very long and distinguished military career. I never thought that I would be able to meet such a person, let alone be the recipient of his humor and wisdom about life. I have sat and listened to his observations about the current politics, not just in our community, but on the national and international levels, and continue to be amazed at the wealth of knowledge he could share with students trying to understand high school political science, not to mention the collegiate level. This gentleman served in a military that, at one point, did not think that he had the right to vote or fight on the front lines with the White men. He helped provide the access for people like me who came years later to show that we, people of color, can also serve as officers and in any other category of service that is needed to keep our country safe. Had it not been for the bravery of soldiers like Mr. Powell, our current military would not have the structure that it has today, and many of our Black students would not have the opportunities that exist in the present time.

Next is Mr. Alton D. Crampton. He was born in 1932 in Washington, D.C. and considers himself an advocate for the community. He retired from Impel Marketing as a district manager at a time when Black people were unable to get jobs at the supervisory level. He earned a degree from the historic Milnor's Teacher College in Washington, which was the forerunner to the University of the District of Columbia. This gentleman has remained active in the NAACP, HCCO, and is, to this

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day, a staunch supporter of Westbury High School. His view of the local politics is one of intractable humor on the way “we did things in the old days.” He reminds me that whatever I am dealing with now is not unlike what they dealt with back then. In other words, there is nothing new under the sun; it is just new to you. He is always willing to explain his philosophy about civil rights and why we only made it so far. Mr. Crampton carries on the ancient African tradition of oral recitation of our long, proud history in this state and country.

Then there is the very pleasant Mr. Henry Wilson III. This gentleman was born in 1928 in Houston’s Fifth Ward and was the first Black salesperson hired to work at Foley’s Department Store. He always has a pleasant smile and reminds me of my father. He is often seen at the Family Café with his spouse, Carrie. When they are not together, he speaks so kindly of her I am moved by his affection. His behavior could go a long way in teaching our men-in-training how to have a successful relationship. He is also a classic sports car enthusiast and the proud father of sons, Ron and Brian. He retired from Foley’s in 1990 after working there forty-two years. He knows the value of a hard day’s work. Whenever I run into Mr. Wilson and sit with him and the fellows or with his spouse, I get a sense of the solid community pride that he possesses. It renews my strength to listen to him discuss the way he began his job at Foley’s, to rise to the level of top salesman. This is the kind of history our young people need to learn: that people of color were not always welcome in the shops, stores, and eateries that so many of us now take for granted. To be the first in this type of employment is a testament to one’s sense of self. I can only imagine what type of environment this fine gentleman entered into at that department store when his career first began.

Next there is Mr. Lawrence Marshall. This distinguished gentleman was born in 1932 and is a native Houstonian as well. He has been an educator most of his professional life and is the current president of the Houston Independent School District Board of Education. He is involved with multiple educational associates as well as many civic organizations and shows no signs of slowing down. His

organizational skills are evident even in the casual atmosphere of the restaurant crowd. He has seen and done it all in the Houston educational system and yet maintains such an air of dignity it is hard not to listen to his stories without rapt attention. At the same time, his humor and wit can disable a less worthy opponent. He pulls no punches and tells it like it was, and is, all at the same time.

Last, but certainly not least, is Mr. Percy Hawthorne Robinson. Mr. Robinson seems, at times, to be the quiet one of the gang, but at a moment's notice he revs up the lively noontime conversation with jokes about my occupation. He was born in 1932 and is a veteran of the City Marshall's Organization, which preceded the formation of the Houston Police Department. He told me that his first career was to arrest people who did not pay their traffic tickets. Then he became a police officer when HPD formed. His career did not stop there. He went on to attend Texas Southern University and earned degrees in the arts and sciences, as well as at the School of Law. He then became a field officer in the Anti-Poverty Program in the Baytown/La Porte area of Texas. Since his retirement, he has continued to be involved with the local politics and is especially known for his activity with the Harris County Council of Organizations. He has held numerous positions with this "watchdog" organization for government activity in Harris County.

So, now you know who has my ear on many a Friday afternoon. I delight in sharing these old stories over a bowl of gumbo or a whole fried catfish. For me, it is like old times. The respect that these men have for their friends is apparent even in the face of the good-natured ribbing that takes place. Their values are clear in that they remain concerned over the plight of African-Americans, especially the young ones who may not have learned the true history of the hard fought wars over civil rights and human dignity. Each one of these men should be acknowledged for their contributions to our society. For me, it is the carrying on of our ancestral tradition of oral history that is so important. Where else could you learn of what really went down back then? We know it wasn't recorded in the textbooks. For

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me, these men and their friendship exemplify what is missing from the younger microwave “want-it-now” generation. The ability to learn patience seems to be lost with the passing on of our elders. I cherish these rare occasions when I can take off my mantle of being in charge and learn at the feet of my elders.

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