



Thanks for the memories

EPIC! Rule #19: The key to an EPIC! life is to know that life is happening "for" you, not "to" you.

Everyone once in a while, you receive a “blast from the past” that brings back a flood of memories. That happened to me just as we were entering the Thanksgiving holiday. I received the above picture from the amazing Anne Erni, currently the Chief People Office of Audible. In 2006, she was the Chief Diversity Officer of Lehman Brothers. Here is the back story to the picture above (I’m in the center in the pink salwar kameez).

It was October 2006. I was midway through my 50 - 60 Decade Game and was at the pinnacle of my career as the Global Leader for the \$1 Billion Life Sciences sector at EY. The phone rang just as I was walking out the door of our New York City apartment on my way to Mumbai, India, to launch a new initiative for EY and keynote Lehman’s first ever Women’s Leadership conference in India.

It was our doctor. I heard the sadness in his voice as he asked me to get my husband to join us on the call. I had to listen for a few minutes before the words began to register. My husband, Forrest, had three months to live. The MRI had come back with clear evidence of esophageal cancer that appeared to be inoperable. When the phone call concluded, Forrest turned to me and said, "I am the battlefield, and you are my General—so time to get to work."

My immediate reaction was to call my colleague who was waiting in the limo downstairs to let him know I had to cancel the trip and he should go without me. But Forrest sat me down and told me he needed me to go. "Carolyn, what I need most now is for you to experience that you can do this. You can carry on your work in the world without me. That is the greatest gift you can give me now. You will be back in a week - and then we will do this together".

I cried all the way to the airport. Called Forrest back to say I was coming home. But he insisted. So I went.

It was an amazing Women's Leadership Conference, one of the first for corporate women working in Mumbai. It was like a revival. There were 3 keynotes, and I was sandwiched between two superstars. Kiran Bedi (in the light blue to my right) was the first woman in India to join the officer ranks of the Indian Police Service — a first of many firsts in her career. Inspiring generations of women, Kiran Bedi became the first Indian and first woman appointed as the United Nations Police Adviser and head of the Police Division in 2003. The other keynote speaker was Lara Dutta, Indian winner of Ms Universe, 2000, activist and model (behind my left shoulder).

I was still in shock as I approached the podium. Today, I don't even remember what I said. I have no copy of my prepared remarks. But I do remember the feeling. I was channeling Forrest, who was an amazing preacher in the pulpit. I felt the heart-to-heart connection with every woman in the audience. I breathed out and they breathed in. I felt the power of purpose run through me and empower them to own their epic power and use that power honorably to contribute to a world that works. I was playing my Decade Game - to be known as a "Sought-after Consigliere Encouraging Leaders to use Power with Honor". And I was following Forrest's instructions to our congregation and to me - - "To live every day in a way that is worth dying for".

Time for another EPIC! Rule of the Game.

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An EPIC! life is not all fun and games. Sometimes the most memorable games you have ever played have been the most challenging. How do you make them winnable? By making sure that you know how to make meaning out of them. Discovering meaning for yourself in a way that, over time, can create meaning for others.

The great mythologist, Joseph Campbell, who popularized the concept of the Hero's Journey, said this about meaning and purpose:

"People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive."

I have often said that the Decade Game is not the thing. Its just the thing that helps guide me to live every day full-hearted and full-throated. What is the real game? It's to play to win the human game of knowing that we are the birthers, the nurturers and the mourners of others. Every day our choices and actions - be they personal, professional, or philanthropic - are to be in service of our dreams, not our fears. Every venue, experience and adventure is a practice field to do that. To feel the poignant rapture of being alive.

So - no matter what the universe has in store for you - its happening "for" you, not "to you" if you are committed to play to win. And one more quote from my late husband Forrest. "The only thing that can never be taken away from you is the love you give away before you go".

And that is EPIC!

GAME ON!

Sending love and light during this holiday season.
Carolyn



PS. Since the New Year, I have been sharing my EPIC! Rules to play the game of life, your way. I have them posted on the [website](#) if you have missed a newsletter or would like to review them. Click below and scroll down to the Rules. (And you can always buy the [book](#).)

[EPIC! Rules of the Game](#)

If you have any questions or would like to talk to me directly, please email me at carolyn@mydecadegame.com and we will set up a time.



You can't get there from
here, but you can get
here from there.

EPIC!

THE
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*Power
Play
Book*

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