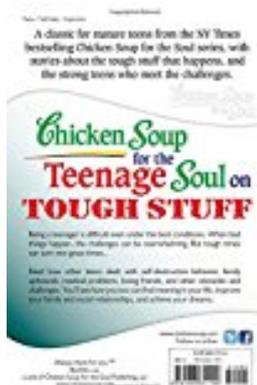


# [PDF] Chicken Soup For The Teenage Soul On Tough Stuff: Stories Of Tough Times And Lessons Learned (Chicken Soup For The Soul)

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen - pdf download free book



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## **Description:**

**About the Author Jack Canfield** is a co-founder of Chicken Soup for the Soul.

**Mark Victor Hansen** is a co-founder of Chicken Soup for the Soul.

**Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.** Our Song

You asked me to sing to you. I complained, "Aw, Mom, I'll wake people up." Once again, I let my ever-present stage fright come before you. Looking back, it's hard to believe I was so selfish. But you persisted, and eventually I caved.

I sang our favorites—Barbra Streisand, Linda Ronstadt and Bette Midler. My voice was quiet and hushed, commiserate with the dim light in the room. I made sure the sound didn't penetrate the walls. You listened with your eyes closed, then thanked me, and told me how lovely and peaceful it was.

When we brought you home that last week in January, I would sit with you in the evenings. I read to you from *The Tragedy of Richard the Third*, knowing it was your favorite. Of course, I made sarcastic comments along the way. "Lady Anne was the biggest idiot in the world." My eyes searched yours for a response, hoping they would open and smile at my glib attempts.

I read you poetry from Robbie Burns and Walt Whitman, and rubbed lotion on your hands. Finally, I worked up the courage to sing to you again. You weren't able to ask me this time. Grandma peeked through the door and gave us a tearful smile. I stopped. "Keep singing to your mother," she said. When I finished Dad asked me, "Would you sing at the memorial service?" You were lying right beside me, and suddenly it seemed so perverse to have this conversation in front of you. "I don't know if I can. I'll try." We didn't speak of it again.

That Saturday, after you were gone, I went home and practiced with a little help from the Absolut bottle. I needed you to hear me one last time, beautiful and unblemished.

And then there I was, standing at the podium. I didn't tell anyone what was planned in case I chickened out. While the minister told me when to come up during the service, Shirley, who was giving the eulogy, asked, "But what if someone stands up before Jennifer?" I shot back, "Well, now, they'll just have to wait, won't they?" She laughed, "You are just like your mother." I smiled and thanked her for the compliment.

My hands shook as I faced the microphone. I spoke a few words to gather my courage and compose myself. Then, very quietly, I sang "Somewhere over the Rainbow."

I thought back to when I was a little girl. You would call me on the phone during one of your trips to watch *The Wizard of Oz* with me on TV. Miles apart and racking up the long-distance charges, we would both squeal during the tornado scene. We sang duets, and trios when Ashlea rode in the car with us. It was our song.

I finished the last line, "If happy little bluebirds fly, beyond the rainbow, why oh why can't I?" Then I whispered, "Mom, you have beautiful wings now. May they take you wherever you want to go. . . ."

At least a hundred people witnessed the most difficult moment of my life, but only one person mattered. Of course, I will sing for you, Mom. Feel free to ask me any time.

□*Jennifer Dalrymple-Mozisek*

## What She Doesn't Know

My friend has a problem, and sometimes I feel like I'm the only one who notices her when she's lost and she's tormented and she's alone in the world. And when she's high. She comes to me and she tells me what she's done today, whether it's speed or cocaine or something bigger and faster, something harder and louder, something else that takes the person I laugh with and depend on somewhere she can't stay.

She is ripping herself away from her truth, and the only way I can reach her is to let her know that I care about her. All I can do is listen to her babble when she's high and weep when she's coming down, because I can't fix her. All I can be is a friend to her until she realizes she has a problem, until she stops running from her daytime self to the lure of things that make her worries rest. I can't make her stop. So it's been hard to have her pass out and the line go dead. To have her come to my house running on speed—not to be with me, but so that she doesn't get caught.

It is my right to help her. And to point out to her how strong she is, how real and breathing and clear she is to me, and to everyone. Because she is calling for help, but doesn't know it yet. She is yelling and swallowing her tears, because somewhere she knows that she can't keep packing herself away. Sometime this anger or fury or sadness will find her, and she needs to stand in its torrential downpour and get filled by it, because somewhere inside her she is empty. I can't be her mother, and I can't be with her all the time, telling her what she can put in her body and what she can't. So she has gotten lost somewhere in the deep end, and I can't pull her out, but I can show her how she can do it herself.

I am watching her, and I am hugging her and trying to remind her of the countless reasons why I am so much better from knowing her. I can listen to her when she needs me, and when she doesn't. I can let her know that no matter what she does she is my friend, and nothing will change that. I can take a step back and see what's taking parts of her away. I can encourage her to answer honestly when I ask how she is. I can remind her about moderation. I can point out the people who love her. I can show her how much she needs to stop for herself. I can be a positive influence on her. I can listen to her when her voice hints of this thing that she is missing and can't find. She needs to see for herself that her daytime self is alive and beating and multi-colored. I can help her remember what her life was like before the dealers and the midnight fixes. I can help her stand tall and strong, on feet and legs and ankles she trusts. I can help her see that life is not about three-hour solutions that make her wake up feeling dead. I can be someone safe to her. I can care about her so much that I point her to the exit and hold her hand as she gets there.

My friend has a problem, and I am helping her. I am listening and I am talking and I am working with her and I am learning how to be the best to her. I have unshakable confidence in her, and I know that she can stand where she is and she can stop. I can be the person she turns to, because she can't see right now that she can turn to herself. She can't see it yet, but soon.

□Kate Reder

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