

Roxanne Cowan

*Congratulations! Today is your day. You 're off to Great Places!
You 're off and away! You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.
You 're on your own. You know what you know.
And YOU'RE the guy who 'll decide where to go.*

I still remember the day. I was reading "Oh the places you'll go" by Dr. Seuss with my mother in the hospital while she was undergoing treatment for her first mastectomy. The story was intended to make me feel better, but instead I started to cry. She held me close, telling me that everything would be ok. Drying my tears, she explained that no matter what happened to her, like the book, today was my day. Only I could choose the right direction. She would always cheer me on, but I would have to find my own way,

*On you will hike, and I know you 'll hike far
to face up to your problems whatever they are.*

When I was six years old, I was diagnosed with cancer. Fortunately, like my mother, I was born with an innate sense of optimism and determination. From the moment I was diagnosed, I fought back. I was not willing to let it beat me. Even in the surgery, and hair loss, my spirit prevailed. The doctors and nurses who spent over a year of my childhood with me thought that I was crazy as I danced through the hospital and visited other children. They simply could not believe that such a deathly ill child was able to be so optimistic. I spoke of my future and where I would be in years to come, and they looked at me like I was a loon. To them, I was terminally ill, yet God was telling me something different. Soon enough, I was put into remission, proving to all that I could overcome anything that I set my mind to.

Instead of losing my leg to amputation, the protocol for then, I underwent an extensive, experimental limb salvage procedure in order to save my leg. of chemotherapy. I battled the sickness and nausea depths from the chemotherapy. Yet throughout it all, I managed to finish my schoolwork with straight A's, all while maintaining a positive attitude. It was never easy, but it was also never impossible. Passion for life fueled my way. My mother had taught me a valuable lesson. Through Dr. Seuss, she taught me how to succeed.

*And will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed! 98 3/4% guaranteed.
So...you 're off to great places. Today is your day.
Your mountain is waiting. Get on your way.*

Every so often I still dig this book out of my closet to help me remember my fight. My mother may have lost her battle and this story remain as a constant reminder. I can do anything as long as I put my best foot forward and choose the right path. I will certainly continue on my way.