

DETROIT NATIVE SUN

The eviction notice

By Ma'at Seba
SUN COLUMNIST



Job security has now become obsolete, financial instability is becoming a reality to masses of people, and the unemployment lines continue to grow daily. Our society has trained us to value materialism instead of Mother Earth, spirituality, each other and God. Some people are validated and defined by their jobs, titles, money, house, car or accessories, and that, is a sad commentary. The word stability is now being used in past tense. This society's false sense of security and faith has been founded upon the government, the acquisition of things, power and money, but not on God. Now that this "security and faith" is being shaken apart, the focus is now being turned in the direction into which it should have been from the very beginning, towards God. When you are forced to move out of your comfort zone, and the reality that things are not going to be the way that you have been accustomed to them being, that new reality becomes an almost paralyzing realization.

As more people lose their jobs, cars, and homes, they will begin to re-evaluate their lives and seek a belief system, which fills the voids in their Spirit. God has been waiting patiently for all her lost sheep to come back to the fold. In the midst of trials and tribulation, prayer and an unwavering faith in God, is the only salvation that there is. Standing in faith sounds simple enough to do, and to write about it, speak about it and preach about it is honorable. But to really live it is a completely different thing.

Faith - unquestioning belief that does not require proof or evidence; complete trust, confidence or reliance. An unquestioning belief in God is what I have had to have many times in my life. When faced with a challenge or crisis in life, the first reaction is fear become fearful, which clouds judgment. But fear, a very powerful and sometimes debilitating emotion, is the most important emotion that must be overcome and replaced with faith. "Faith and fear can not dwell in the heart at the same time", either you stand in one or you will fall in the other. Faith must be accompanied by its companion "Surrender", which means that one must be willing to let go and not need to feel that they have to be in control of a situation.

Surrender - to give up possession of or power over, act of yielding or giving up;

give up claim to. Lets breakdown the word Surrender to get a different understanding of it:

sur - upon, above, beyond
rend - to tear; pull apart; rip out
de(r) - away from; off; undo; reverse action

This can be interpreted as: one being able to pull themselves apart from something and move away in order to rise above and beyond. To be in a space of surrender and stand in faith means that you are willing to "Let the chips fall where they may" or accept the outcome and the consequences of a particular situation. Also, with the knowing that the outcome in some way will be to your highest good.

When confronted with a challenge or crisis in life and you have done all that you know to do to bring it to a resolution, pray and ask God to assist you. Then surrender the situation and KNOW, not wonder and worry if or when the situation will be resolved. KNOW that it is done. Knowing that God will resolve it in the way that God deems for it to be, not in the ways that we think or wish the situation to be resolved, but accepting the resolution in whatever manner it reveals itself, is Faith.

I too have had my own challenges, I once was facing an eviction and agonized over where the rent money could possibly come from. I began to lose hope and faith, and in the midst of my fears and tears, and after much prayer, I re-played the many scenarios in my life when I couldn't see my next step, blinded by fears, doubts, anger or guilt. What was my fear, that God wouldn't or that God couldn't help me, exactly where was the justification for the fear? In each situation, God had brought me through it when I could see no other way out. I began to question myself as to why I should expect any less in this situation. In actuality, we all have been trained to be fearful of what "man" or "the system" can do to us, instead of what God will do for us. I came to a new realization and placed myself into a space of surrender and said: "Okay God, you know my heart and my situation, you have never left me before and I know that you never will leave me. If it is for my highest good that I leave this place then I will, if not, I know that you will work this out for me, I love you and I am standing in faith." Well, about an hour later I got a phone call from a friend who felt that something was wrong with me and as they questioned me I revealed my situation and they lent me the money for my rent! As the tears of gratitude flowed, my faith grew.

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The DeMarco Project Speaks: Celebrating a phenomenal veteran



By Kim J. Clark Aka Expanding Love
SUN COLUMNIST



It is indeed an honor to have had the opportunity to interview Major Laverne Santangelo (Ret.)

Major Santangelo (Ret.) served in the Michigan Army National Guard from 1987 - 2009. She served two types of missions at the State and Federal levels. Her stellar military career includes three times mobilized active duty, served as support to Bosnia in 1995, activated twice after 9/11, and served in Washington, D.C. and Michigan supporting Guantanamo Bay.

While serving our nation, Laverne was also the wife of a supportive husband and the mother of two sons.

Laverne decided to become involved with the military via the Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC) while attending college. She and a friend joined on a whim because they did not have summer jobs and needed money. The pay was decent, \$600 for six weeks at summer camp. So, off to Fort Knox, they went. Laverne had no idea this decision would lead to a 23-year military career. Although she enjoyed the experience, it was not a cakewalk. She endured racism; however, the training and camaraderie outshined racist incidents.

Laverne had the good fortune to marry her high school sweetheart, Jim Santangelo, who stayed by her side throughout her military career. At times, her career took a toll on Laverne and her husband. For example, Laverne was deployed to Germany for one year, eight months after giving birth to her youngest son. During the last five years of service, there was constant upheaval in her personal life, as well as an uptick in military assignments due to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the benefits outweighed the downside. Serving in the military allowed Laverne to send her sons to private schools. She strategically worked her way up the ranks, solidified her family's financial future, and secured her son's education.

In 1989, Laverne was commissioned as Second Lieutenant. Her commanding officer saw something in her and helped her develop a plan for a successful military career. He advised her to become a Military Police Officer (MP) to get promoted to a command position within the MP.

As previously stated, over time, her military duties became a strain on Laverne and her family.

When Major Santangelo was called to active duty to serve in Iraq in 2007, due to person and military issues, the decision was made that it would not be in her best interest as she was dealing with PTSD (now known as PTS for military-related post-traumatic stress). Having capitalized on the educational opportunities available to military personnel in 1992, Laverne earned a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications with a minor in Military History & Broadcasting from Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan.

In 2010, shortly after she exited the military, she completed a Master of Arts in Community Agency Counseling specializing in Substance abuse from Oakland University, Rochester Hills, Michigan., where she earned the distinction of becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor because of her desire to serve the community.

Having worked through military service mental health trauma and working as a volunteer at the Problem Pregnancy Center, she realized that mental health care is as critical as physical health care. Laverne has an extensive background working with substance abuse and mental health. In addition, she understands the value and importance of addressing the "whole person." Laverne Santangelo, LLC, Licensed Professional Counselor, Shelby Township, MI, 48317 | Psychology Today. She has the following certifications: Grief Therapist, Grief Yoga Specialist, Yoga Teacher (200hrs.), and Whole Life Healing Life Coach. Visit her website to learn more about client services at <https://www.lavernesantangelo.com/>. When asked what advice she would give the community, she responded, "Be demanding about your self-care. Put your mental health first." At The DeMarco Project, we proudly recognize and celebrate Major Laverne Santangelo (Ret.), a Phenomenal Veteran, Mother, and Community Partner.

Kim is the mother of a Veteran who loved his country and was willing to lay his life down for the freedoms he believed in. She is the Founder and Executive Director of The DeMarco Project, a non-profit organization. Her mission is to save Veteran lives and improve the quality of life for traumatized military service persons. If you want to support her in this work, please donate via the website www.TheDeMarcoProject.org. Please like us on Facebook and Instagram at The DeMarco Project 4 Vets.

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