



RELATIVES AND AUTHORS

Two Sioux Falls Women Publish Inspiring Stories

By Thea Miller Ryan | Photos by Margaret Pennock

A local niece and aunt combo is taking their connection to a place most relatives don't go — to a publishing house.

Charlotte Hofer, former owner and editor of a business magazine, published a book using her experience in entrepreneurship called *Courage to Fly*. Her aunt, Collette Carlson, who lost her husband to cancer, wrote her book, *No Matter What*, about learning to live through the grief.

"At the same time I was compiling my book," Charlotte said, "my Aunt Collette was writing her story, too." The relatives would bounce ideas off each other. "She'd come to my house and bring lasagne and we'd sit by my pond and ask each other 'Does this dialogue ring true? Is that paragraph clear? Does the book make sense?'"

Using their knowledge and experiences, the ladies completed their books and sent the manuscripts off to Christian Faith Publishing. "We heard back from them — within a week of each other — that both books had been accepted for publication," Charlotte said. "It made it really exciting for us and doubled the joy!"

Charlotte's business themed book was inspired by her own entrepreneurship experiences. "Entrepreneurship can be a lonely journey," she said. "We all need inspiration. *Courage to Fly* is based on the editor notes I wrote when I owned the business magazine. Every month I wrote an inspirational

note addressing common challenges entrepreneurs face, and readers wrote to me that these messages really encouraged them, so I compiled them into a book."

She calls herself a "serial entrepreneur." She said, "Sometimes you think you can't put in one more hour, make one more sales call. You think you're all alone. *Courage to Fly* offers short, simple and practical insights for entrepreneurs, plus inspiring stories."

She hopes people will be inspired to achieve their hopes and dreams, to have the courage to fly high and be fearless, both as an entrepreneur and in life. "There are Bible verses with every inspirational message," she said. "It's entrepreneurship through a Christian lens."

Collette's book, *No Matter What*, helps people who have lost someone to find the courage to move on from the grief and find happiness again. "A lot of it comes from my journals," Collette said. "It's a very personal and passionate account of the different stages of grief we all go through."

After her husband died, Collette was a 48 year old widow with three young adult children and a farm. "Dealing with everything is hard," she said. "The financial part of loss is huge. I wondered how I could keep the family together and keep us all going. I started my own business. I learned that you must prevail."

"There is so much emotion in a loss and so many problems come up. I journaled the path we were on, from his diagnosis of cancer, to him losing an eye and then cancer on his liver. Everything I went through brought me closer to God, as I tried to find His path for my life."

She said, "I expect people who read it will laugh and cry," This emotional journey in her book led to it being in contention for a movie through the publishing company.

Publishing dreams are coming true for both aunt and niece, whose life experiences are now helping others. Both books are available at Barnes and Noble and online at Amazon or Christian Faith Publishing. ■



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