



Encourage, Persist and Revise

THE SAYING, “NOTHING IS CERTAIN BUT DEATH and taxes” is only two-thirds of the truth. There is one more item that must be added to complete the trifecta of certainty: visits to see Santa.

Tucked away into the Christmas bins is the photographic evidence of the consistency with which trips to visit Santa were made each year in my family, from when my sisters and I were small children until we were out of college. The earliest edition photos are faded, a testimony to how photography, ink and paper have improved over the years. Also improving over the years was the Santa we'd visit. In one picture, taken at The Crescent, it looks like pleasantly plump older gentlemen with white beards were in low supply that season, as the Santa upon whose lap I perched appears to be in his late teens, with acne and a face so young, unfilled out and narrow, that the beard dipped below his mouth.

It wasn't until we made the switch to One Hour Photo, located in the old River Park Square, near the old Sandwich Garden, that we struck Santa Gold. This guy was the real deal. Perfectly sized, old enough to radiate confidence and wisdom, yet maintaining a youthful zest for life. He sported a beard that was white as snow, rosy cheeks and eyes that truly twinkled. All of this was packed into a pristine red velvet suit.

The real magic came when he spoke. He would look me in the eye, ask me questions and wait for an answer. The line that always stretched out the store and wrapped down the hallway didn't cause him to rush. He focused on what I had to say. He asked real questions – not what I wanted for Christmas, but how things were going, what I was doing in life, and what my goals

were. He remembered details and checked in each year.

I don't know if he ever asked what I wanted for Christmas, but I know he was the real Santa, because he gave the best gift every year: he made me, and everyone else who visited him, feel important, valued, encouraged and loved.

As we made our annual migration to visit Santa, I felt accountable to him every year to have done something to move myself forward and achieve my goals, knowing he would check in, and I better have an answer.

Being accountable to someone or something is a powerful tool. I like to think that I am self motivated enough to always get things done of my own volition and strength, but it is not always true. I can do a lot, but sometimes the things that are more challenging require additional help from those around us.

As we enter into this holiday season, this is a double issue. So we won't be gathering together again until February, well after most of our New Year's resolutions have been broken or cast to the side. If you are in the roughly 77 percent of the population that resolves to get healthier each year, but struggles to do it, there may be help on the horizon.

Spokane Coeur d'Alene Living's 12 Week Fitness Challenge is launching beginning January 5th. We are challenging our readers to get healthy together; however, even we need motivation. Which is where Justin Rundle, our health and fitness writer, comes in. He has helped us put together a fitness challenge for our readers (p.117), and is encouraging us to get healthy.

When someone is in your corner, believes in you and is holding you accountable to do what you said you would do, to strive for your goals and to not give up, it is a recipe for success. Sometimes we just need someone to say, “I believe in you and I'm not going to let you fail!”

We want our readers to be healthy and fit, so we hope you will join us in this challenge, and together we can support each other and hold each other accountable over the next 12 weeks as we work to become fit and healthy.

It is so gratifying when you persevere, struggle through the hard work and reach your goal. I recently did this with the completion and publication of my first book, *Spokane's Stories: 28 Stories of the People, Places and Events That Have Shaped Spokane*. For as long as I can remember, it has been a dream of mine to write a book. What I didn't realize until I was so far into it there was no going back, was the amount of time, effort and energy the process would take. Many nights and weekends were sacrificed to the computer, long days and late nights were required, and at times it seemed like it would never happen. And then one day, it did. The books arrived, and I held in my hand the tangible evidence of a dream come true.

Revisions were part of the process, and they are also part of the process in life, which we know so well here at the magazine. As we begin the new year, we are excited about some revisions, refreshes and renewed approaches to the magazine. You can look forward to some exciting changes in the February 2015 issue.

We hope that you will encourage us and hold us accountable to continue producing the best local publication possible. That is our goal – for *certain!*

Merry Christmas – and Happy New Year – to all, and to all a good night!

Blythe