

Believe

My Story – as told by Lisa L. Grim

Written by Nicholas Wagaman

The word “Believe” is probably one of my Top 10 words. I feel it is so important to believe in yourself, in love, or to just believe in Santa Claus. Twenty-five years ago, I would never have believed I would own my own restaurant of 135 employees with annual sales in the millions. Sixteen years ago, I was newly separated, attending college, a mother of three, and had been robbed, beaten, and left for dead by a former employee at this very restaurant. With severe head injuries, I was forced to drop out of college, and then faced the reality of jail time for tax evasion, as a result of my ex-husband’s failure to pay over a half a million dollars in restaurant debt.

I decided to forge ahead by buying out my ex-husband and his brother’s interest in the business and turning the restaurant around for the better. I had very little college education and was a stay-at-home mother and part-time waitress, so confronting all the bill collectors coming after my ex-husband’s abandoned debt was quite a challenge. An officer of the bank even came by one day to take the restaurant keys and shut us down. I managed to fight him off for one more day.

In December of 1993, I officially took over The Pub & Restaurant. I kept my ex on payroll for six months, so he could stay at home and take care of our two youngest children. My oldest son and I basically slept on a friend’s couch until I could afford an efficiency apartment. To make things worse, the restaurant ended its year with a huge net loss. My lawyer and accountant assured me that bankruptcy was imminent. I could not live with the possibility of not paying back those I owed so much. Five years and a whole lot of hard work later, I succeeded in paying back every last penny.

Despite all of my financial woes, the hardest part was not seeing my children. In June of 1994, my ex and my two youngest children moved in with his parents an hour’s drive away, making our shared custody nearly impossible. Without any family of my own to support me, I worked 24/7 to scrape together the rent for myself and my oldest son. As many of you may know, the pain of not having all your children together to snuggle nightly is unbearable. My oldest son basically had to grow up in the restaurant’s upstairs while I tried to make it all work out downstairs in the restaurant.

The story gets brighter, but not yet! In 2001, a late night fire burnt the entire restaurant to the ground. It took over a year to completely rebuild and open our doors once again. In times like that, the word “Believe” and a whole lot of love and support from my employees and the community are all you have to keep going forward. The firefighters, contractors, and employees that saw us through those dark times are the reason we are still here.

Today, The Pub & Restaurant stands as an example that when faced with adversity and heartache, we can all rebuild our lives and give a little something back to those around us. **Believe!**

