

CONNECT | PERSPECTIVE

CHOOSE HAPPINESS

NANCY DEPCIK LOST EVERYTHING, THEN REGAINED HERSELF

BY EMILY LEAS
PHOTOGRAPHED
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NANCY DEPCIK PUT herself out there on a daily basis. She's the kind of person who by the time she's done ordering coffee at Starbucks, she knows the barista has a young child, is working two jobs and now has a possible lunch date with Depcik.

This confidence comes from years of success in the professional world, but also from having to pull herself out of a dark personal experience and rebuild her life. Depcik refers to this simply as, "my difficult time."

Even though that difficult time is why she's where she is today—a professional speaker and coach with Unshakeable Success, a business she started four years ago—it by no means defines her.

Depcik clearly remembers the day her husband of 15 years cashed out on everything they had built together.

"Like most unwelcomed change, I didn't see it coming," she says. "And because we owned a business together I not only lost my marriage and my job, I also lost my finances."

Worst of all for this Chicago native, she lost herself. She felt everything she had worked for was gone, including her trademark confidence. For someone used to finding success as a teacher, a top sales rep for a national advertising agency, a Quizno's franchisee and in many other roles, Depcik was unprepared for this crushing blow in her personal life.

"It was like I was in a daze. You don't believe this is happening, this can't be true," she says. "I didn't know how I was going to get through the day."

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Get inspired by Nancy Depcik and her Unshakeable Success at BRAVA's THRIVE Connections Luncheon, July 23. For more information and tickets, see p. 18 and BRAVAmagazine.com.

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Each day, she would look in the mirror and tell herself that even though others had given up on her, she would not give up on herself.

"I tried every day to do something that made me happy," she says. "Even if you just think about something that makes you feel better, just for a minute or two, you can forget the world you're in and ease your pain. Every day, do it little by little."

For Depcik, it was good movies, books, walks through Lincoln Park, writing and talking. Lots of talking. With the help of friends who listened without judging, Depcik began to find herself again, and along the way learned not only how to be a better friend, but also how to take a challenge or experience and turn it into a story to inspire others.

When she tells her stories during speaking engagements through Unshakeable Success, it's less about, "I did it and so can you," and more about concrete things you can use today to build your confidence.

"It's lessons I learned that helped me out of the darkness. Stories so powerful that I want to share them with others," she says.

Depcik also believes that what you put out to the world is what you bring into your life, and it's clear even through a short conversation what she's trying to bring to her own life: Positivity, adventure, curiosity and friendship.

"If you're grateful, if you look at challenges as something that's going to propel you to the next level rather than drag you down, those are the kind of people you'll attract in your life," she explains.

When the darkness began to fade for Depcik, these lessons became clear to her. But when friends suggested the technology-adverse single gal try online dating, the answer was the same as the one when asked if she thought she would ever leave Chicago.

"No. Never. Ever," she says laughing.

Eventually she realized that trusting herself was the first step to trusting others again and she created an eHarmony profile. When a picture of the same man in Madison appeared three times, she took a leap of faith.

"When I tell people during my speeches that I'm married now, they applaud," she says. "They line up afterward and tell me how I've made an impact on their lives. That is the greatest reward of all."

