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True Heroes Among Us, The One and Only Valerie Harper

By Adrienne Papp | March 14, 2013

There was a lavish event on December 2, 2012 that in some ways served as an opening to the Award Seasons: the most exciting months in Hollywood, but probably around the world, as more than a billion people tuned in this year just during the Oscar ceremony alone.

The Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors Hosts its Annual Award Dinner for the Biggest Names in Hollywood every year. This year the Host of this precious evening was the beautiful and vibrant Valerie Harper.

People say the most memorable event in their lives is their wedding. For me, the indescribable excitement and honor of dining in a closed setting with the makers and shakers of Hollywood topped it all. These larger-than-life icons with paramount creativity make the world go around. Truth to be told, the actors only bring the work of the writers, producers and directors to life. I wasn't really intimidated by such legendary Industry names as Valerie Harper, Jay Roach, Gale Anne Hurd, Graham Yost, Stan Lathan and Two and a Half Men director James Widdoes, Steven Spielberg to name just a few of the attendees.

For me being surrounded with the most creative people on the planet was THE moment of my life, for Valerie Harper that most special moment, as interviewed on Pierce Morgan Tonight, was the moment she locked eyes with her husband for life and when her husband suggested to adopt a baby, which they did together.

Valerie was not only kind to me in a down to earth, simple, and loving way with that famous beautiful big smile on her face, but she also treated me as her equal, and even shared her own personal email address with me. That is who she is! Einstein once said: "Only a life lived for others is worth living" I believe Valerie is the living example of that.

She is best known for her roles as Rhoda Morgenstern on the 1970s television series, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, and its spin-off, Rhoda, and later as Valerie Hogan on Valerie.

Her Canadian-born mother, Iva (née McConnell), was a nurse, and her father, Howard Donald Harper, was a couch. During the interview with Morgan she thanked her parents for her well-rounded personality that she feels she got from them. I believe Valerie is one of our greatest humanitarians in the World. Although diagnosed with terminal cancer and given three months to live, instead of hiding and giving in to the diagnosis she is touring the country promoting her book. But, most importantly she is talking about her own upcoming "death," which we all hope will not happen as something that only makes her enjoy the moments of today even more and each and every second as the most precious gift she has and we all have.

I have been talking a lot lately about the latest discoveries in Quantum Physics and how even science can back now all that we used to call "spirituality" and still do WITHOUT the negative connotation to it, but Valerie took it a step forward. She said: "Just watch your thoughts. Be the Observer, and when you are, you start thinking about who is observing?" And, then she referenced in Eckhart Tolle's "The Power of the Now"

Despite my many years "spent with quantum physics Valerie opened my eyes to this very practical and simple question: "Who is the Observer?" With that one question I believe Valerie has changed the lives of millions.

Valerie is a true hero. She looks remarkably gorgeous and well, more beautiful than ever despite having given literally just a few weeks to live or not even that long. Most others would be in a hospital at this stage or in bed hidden from the World, but Valerie has been touring around giving large number of interviews and talks about how she had defeated lung cancer before, which is part of why she wrote the book: I, Rhoda By Valerie Harper. This time around it is brain cancer that can give her seizures any moment. Yet, this brave and beautiful larger than life brave soul talks to all of us about the value of life. She wanted to deliver the message to her family, friends and fans directly on camera so that she would be the first one to experience it and make it immediate and straightforward.

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The Caucus dinner that Valerie hosted so vivaciously is viewed as a leader of the creative Television community, an organization that promotes the best-broadcast entertainment products for a global audience. It counts among its membership the best of broadcast television's creative content providers, including the top 150 Television producers, writers, directors, and program directors of primetime, daytime and children's programming. The event was produced by Caucus Steering Committee Members Co-Chair Vin DiBona and Treasurer Lee Miller. The awards dinner chair was Norman Powell. The president is Chuck Fries, with whom I had a few minutes to talk about the Caucus, stated that over one million dollars had been awarded to support and mentor new filmmakers, while promoting and protecting the artistic rights of its creative community.

Valerie Harper hosted this grand event with great flair and was most certainly the perfect match as a four-time Emmy winner, and a Tony nominated legend. She also had numerous performances on Broadway and recently The Simpsons. "This is a wonderful event," Harper said in a private interview. "They don't open this up to just anyone. This is for the people who make the entertainment, and it's also about bringing along new talent and young people."

When asked how she copes so well with her prognosis, she responded, "I am just putting one foot in front of the other" She expressed the feeling she had to come out and talk about her condition and life until she can. "I am not in a wheel chair, she added. She wanted people to understand that yes, death is inevitable and none of us is getting out of it alive, we are all in it together, but then " do not get stuck with this recognition, just live in the moment. Don't be thinking about your death way before your death, that is what I am really trying to share," Valerie said.

She also thanked all of us for sending her emails and caring for her in many ways social media can today, but "she was not able to respond to all of us just yet because she has been touring and doing lots and lots of interviews."

To most people a terrifying diagnosis like this would be devastating, yet Valerie is taking it in such a uniquely different and positive way that really none of us has seen before. Where does she get the strength from? She looks at her life as a blessing, and looking back realizes that "she had a lot of great fun, and if we had less fear and resistance to death, life would be happier and the moments of our lives would be richer"

Although People's magazine said she had 3 months to live, oncologists really do not say that. They say 3 months or 6 or maybe a week. They don't know.

She also added that "she is living more responsibly, and every American should have health insurance and we should work on this until it is accomplished. Because the stress left on the family is just enormous. "I could not agree with this more!

She pointed out that "people need to get early testing, and I tell people to keep their chin up."

And, when asked about what she wants to achieve before she goes? "Just do not go to your funeral or a loved one's funeral until the day of the funeral. Because then you miss the life that you have left," she responded.

She thanked her husband for being so terrific and supportive not only throughout her life and their happy marriage together, but also during these times. She really teared up when expressing her love for everyone around her and the outpouring of care that she has received.

"I just want folks to know that I am okay, I am not suffering, maybe that is ahead but not now and I want folks to know how touched I am to the bone marrow by their concern and love, their offers of care. I will get back to all those wonderful folks who are sending me well wishes. Death is out there for all of us, but there are other ways to handle this not just by sitting around. I am just feeling love"

And when the final question about how she would like to be remembered came up, she said: "Valerie was up from the couch. I was positive and got a great deal of energy, perhaps inherited from my father, which was such a grounding element in my life. But, most importantly people need to forgive, they need to forgive themselves, and as Oprah said it so brilliantly: 'Forgiveness is giving up the wish that the past could have been different.' And when you give it up, you are released. This way you do not have to hold this in, which would only feed the ego even further. But, there is a higher self than the mind. You can look at your mind and monitor your thoughts, just look at it and you become the Observer. You can then say "You become the Observer and then you say to yourself: if my mind is saying this, who is observing without judgment? And that is who we truly are. That higher self! My work on all this has prepared me for facing my reality the way I do today: go public in a way that is clear and that way we do not need a big ceremony because we have done that. I am so touched, the love out there is sooo good for my spirit, and I love you and wish I could hug you all. "

Valerie Harper is truly the greatest inspiration, we have ever seen. I true hero who knows who she really is. Thank you Valerie from all of us!

Adrienne Papp is President of Atlantic Publicity and is the member of the International Press Academy.

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Valerie Harper at the Gala Dinner for The Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors on December 2, 2012



Adrienne Papp Interviewing Valerie Harper at the Caucus Dinner December 2, 2012



Valerie Harper, Sandra Costa and Adrienne Papp at the Private Dinner for the Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors



Adrienne Papp with





Adrienne Papp Arriving to the 2012 Caucus Dinner Hosted by Valerie Harper



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