

Uncommon Entrepreneur

Small Shift Books Teach Children to Live Their Best Life! by Xenia Stanford

"These fun engaging stories will change the way a generation thinks and are must-buy presents for your kids."

Karen Ryan, faculty member, Banff Centre – Leadership Development, and President, Dynatrends Consultants Inc.

Deepak Chopra names it "The soul hypothesis", Eckhart Tolle refers to it as "Awakening to your life's purpose" and Oprah christens it "Living your best life". No matter what you call it, no other author has done what Teresa de Grosbois is doing – through her books and partnering programs – showing children how to live a more conscious life.

If you reflect upon the name of the publishing house she founded, Small Shift Books & Media Inc., you

will see her purpose is to lead the way for children to live a greater community based, more spiritual, more caring life. She is also showing this through creating partnerships for charitable causes.

Teresa was on the verge of creating a not-for-profit structure with a network of authors and illustrators who would donate half their royalties to fund tuition for children in underprivileged areas, when a charity contacted her. This organization, CFYRE (Canadian Foundation of Youth Relations and Education), which was dedicated to building a scholarship program for the Laos America College, was at risk of shutting down.

As Teresa says, "They asked us if we would take them over and simply expand their vision to encompass

ours. The fit was so close it seemed a natural decision to make!"

To fulfill this mandate 50% of the royalties from her books go to CFYRE and other charitable causes. Buying these books aids others in need, while helping our nation's children experience a more fulfilling life.

How can you get involved? It could be as simple as one child at a time changing his or her attitude about possessing "stuff" and instead donating the money that would have been spent. It can be as extensive as having a school or community adopt a project and have a book buying fundraiser. The more Small Shift Books sold, the more money directed to others in greater need.

A side benefit is that helping in this way "makes heroes out of kids by

what they can do".

An example would be for a child or school to befriend a zoo animal and donate the money raised to build a better enclosure. Through licensing agreements, businesses with like minded philosophy can buy advertising space in the backs of the books and, in fact, create special editions with a unique ISBN for them. For example, zoos and other not-for-profit organizations across North America are considering customizing the book *Presents' Presents*, the true story of Teresa's daughter Rae and the shift she and her friends make away from materialism to using money from their birthdays to support not-for-profit organizations.

Are you planning a birthday party or other event where presents are expected? First read *Present's Presents* and you are sure to find a way to make the gifts for that special occasion more meaningful. The good feelings generated in the feted child and the party goers will leave a lasting impression on all. Parents too can set the example. Although the books are written for ages 3-8, the lessons are valuable for all ages. Read them to your children, share the fun and learn together. Encourage older children and teens to read them to younger children. The messages are not lost on any age, yet never come across as preachy.

Is Teresa the new Dr. Seuss? A poet from a very early age, Teresa has a fun rhyming style, while covering serious topics, reminiscent of Seuss. Put in the hands of children, her books have the power to shift an entire new generation the same way Seuss woke kids up to environmental thinking with books like *Horton Hears a Who* and *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*.

"The books", Teresa says of her products, "offer a simple philosophy for children: to understand the difference between happiness which comes from the possession of "things" and happiness which comes from looking inside ourselves to find our connection with others."

Leading by example, Small Shift Books takes a stand on environmental concerns. As author Teresa says,

"My desire to teach kids to be conscious of their thoughts and choices carries through to how we run Small Shifts. While the up-coming book themes range from the environment to healthy living, we remember we have to live what we teach. We continually look at the way we

work and make business choices for how they impact ourselves and others. We need to have balance, peace and health in our own lives in order to teach it to others."

Are you one of the increasing statistics of people divorced or separated? In 2006 the number of single parent homes reached 1.5 million, greater than 50% of divorced couples ("Canadian Divorce Statistics," *Divorce Magazine*). Children need resources to help them through these times, but those specifically for them are rare. That void is what Teresa and her daughters have addressed with *Jolo's Two Bedrooms*.

"I wouldn't wish divorce on anyone" says Teresa, "but when my own marriage fell apart, I soon realized I could not find good books to help me help my kids. After looking back on that time, my daughters and I decided to write a book that would help other families in similar circumstances."

Know any children going through the questions and issues of divorce or separation (maybe even your own)? Put a copy of *Jolo's Two Bedrooms* into their hands. Better yet, read it aloud together and discuss their particular emotions with them.

Jolo, the main character, is confused, heartbroken and angry. He makes mistakes, but these issues are handled in an understanding and non-judgemental way. The rhyming book even features a real therapist and her sage advice.

"Children benefit enormously from having their feelings articulated through the written word. The issue of divorce challenges children on many levels- it is a complicated concept to feel anger towards the parents that you love. Jolo's story supports children by acknowledging that they are not alone, and offers both parents and children an invitation to talk about a very emotional topic."

Jennifer Raymond-Bhatt (Rainbow :), Registered Psychologist with Touchstone Psychological Services.

Do you know or have a child suffering from fears and low self-esteem? These books can boost courage and confidence. *Tara Bara Fara* and the outrageous contagious attitude features a child daring to be different and positively changing those around her. At the end of it you and your child can chase the blues away by dancing your version of the Volcanic Jig. Another book on how attitude can affect our spirit, *Fiona's Fortitude*, packs a powerful lesson in a poem that also showers us with

descriptions that open our eyes to the wonderful world around us. Raise your child's consciousness today. These books will show you how.

"These are beautiful books to inspire children to be their best! A must read for children and adults as we enter the Aquarian Age."

Sheila Biddiscombe Registered Social Worker, and Certified Kundalini Yoga Teacher

Teresa models this gratitude attitude to her daughters, who are characters in her books and were contributing authors to *Jolo's Two Bedrooms*. It demonstrates how quickly a positive outlook from parents influences children to do their best and meet new challenges with self-assurance.

The Presents' Presents is a true story of daughter Rae as a small girl who with her friends makes the shift from thinking happiness comes from wanting and having to understanding that true happiness comes from feeling our connection with others with acts such as giving. The other daughter is little Fiona as the heroine in a true adventure story. Fiona's choice to put aside her fear in a tough moment helps her whole family deal with a dangerous situation.

"Fiona's Fortitude quickly engages all ages in the spirit of adventure and the joy of tackling new experiences."

Christo Grayling, Co-founder of the Pacific Centre for Leadership.

Teresa's degrees (Bachelor of Science and Masters in Geography) reflect her outlook on our planet. Her early work years as a biologist and more recent careers as project leader and mediator also demonstrates her caring for people as well as the environment. Perhaps it is her own experience as a mother that puts her in the perfect place to speak to our future leaders and decision makers through the spirited and uplifting ballads in her books.

We don't know what other tales Teresa is yet to spin, but we do know they will be entertaining, educating and heartening. So stay tuned for these books and more from our Canadian poet laureate of the human spirit no matter how young the audience.

For more information, visit the Small Shift Books website at www.smallshifts.com or contact Teresa de Grosbois at (403) 217-1782, tdgrosbois@smallshifts.com, or Toll Free 1-877-283-6302 and ask for Deborah.

