

Tea Time Treasures

presents



The Story Behind the Story:

The Color of Sunshine

By Carol Kent

A sister hears your heart before a word is spoken.

A sister tastes your tears, and feels your joy.

Deborah Lindsay O'Toole

It had been the worst experience of my life. My boat had been rocked. My confidence had eroded. I questioned my worth as a mother, a wife, a sister, a friend. If I could have curled up in the embryo position, fallen asleep, and said good-bye to life, that would have been my choice.

No, I wasn't actually suicidal. I just didn't think there was much about life that made it worth living.

Most of us have had a phone call, a diagnosis from the doctor, a financial reversal, a betrayal by a loved one, or a crisis in life that made us question God's love for us, our value to others, and our ability to go on with a normal life. That was me. I felt like standing up and saying, "I quit life! It's too hard! It's too unfair! I don't have the energy to fight anymore! I'm disappointed in God! I give up!"

In the middle of my depression and despair, the doorbell rang. It was a deliveryman with a large covered object in his hand. With a cheery smile, he said, "Are you Carol Kent?"

I nodded my affirmation. He continued. "Well, it's your lucky day! Somebody must want to make you feel special today and I have the privilege of delivering this gift. Enjoy your day!"

He disappeared as quickly as he came and I found myself holding the covered object in my hands. It was enveloped in green florist paper and I walked it out to the island in the middle of my kitchen. As I tore away the protective covering, my eyes fell on one dozen of the most perfect yellow roses I had ever laid eyes on.

I carefully opened the sealed envelope and the note took me by surprise. It was from two of my sisters. It read:

**Dear Carol,
You once gave us some decorating advice that was very helpful. You said, "Yellow flowers will brighten any room." We thought you could use a little yellow in your life right now."**

**Love,
Bonnie & Joy**

At that moment the skylight over my kitchen island revealed glorious sunshine pouring its rays on my beautiful bouquet. The yellow roses glistened in-between the baby's breath and soft green fern, bringing an artistic glow to the unexpected gift.

Tears flooded my eyes and I heard myself wailing like a mother mourning a great loss. I hadn't realized that until that moment, I hadn't given myself permission to grieve over my deep disappointment or to express my feelings out loud. I had been slapping on a fake smile, being strong for others, and masking my heavy heart. It was a moment of honest grief and for the first time in a long time, I felt like my life had a new degree of authenticity.

From that day on yellow was my color of hope. My sisters sent yellow cards, yellow candles, and yellow packages. And they spread the word. Friends and other family members picked up on using the color of sunshine—yellow to remind me that no matter what happens to us, no matter who disappoints us, no matter what crisis crosses our path, we can always find hope.

My sisters were right, even though they were reminding me of my own advice. Yellow flowers will brighten any room. And yellow is the color of sunshine. It's also the color of hope!

Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.

"Excerpted from *When I Lay My Isaac Down*, by Carol Kent, copyright 2004. Used by permission of NavPress, www.navpress.com. All rights reserved."

The Mississippi Story . . . Laura's Perspective

I first read the above story in Carol's book, *When I Lay My Isaac Down*. My first reaction was what a creative way for her sisters to display how much they cared. The yellow roses and the note were a reminder to Carol there was hope in the midst of her horrific situation. From that day forth the color *yellow* took on the new meaning for me as well.

I tucked this illustration away in my mind. On various occasions I shared Carol's story with others reminding them that there is hope and to never give up in the difficult situations and various trials they were encountering.



"Hope" ©2006 by Tina Bradford

On August 16th, 2004, my friend, Tina Bradford went to the doctor for what was going to be "routine tests". Instead, she found herself preparing for heart angioplasty. Then the routine procedure turned into a major heart attack, a code 99, five trips for catheterizations, four stents, and now she lives with congestive heart failure. The months which followed were filled with questions, doubt, depression, and major lifestyle adjustments.

Tina made the adjustments and was making good progress until March 22, 2006. I received a phone call from our mutual friend, Gloria. She said Tina was have more heart problems and was very

depressed. During our conversation I shared Carol's story with Gloria. I made the suggestion that we find a way to deliver yellow roses to Tina's home. Living in a very rural area, our best option was for one of us to go to Jackson (45 miles away), pick up the 2 ½ dozen yellow roses with a vase, and deliver them to Tina's house. Gloria agreed and I immediately dropped everything to complete the mission.

When I arrived at Tina's home she wasn't there. I called her cell phone and told her I had something I needed to leave at her house. Per her instructions, I found the hidden house key. Once I was inside, I placed the beautiful yellow roses, complete with baby's breath, on her kitchen table. Their beauty was only intensified against the red and black background of her kitchen. I also left a note beside the flowers, locked the door, and return the key to its secret place. Then I drove home. Mission accomplished!

Gloria and I both received phone calls from Tina when she arrived home several hours later. She was filled with gratitude and told us this was not what she was expecting when she came home. The yellow roses brightened her day and she was reminded once again there is always hope.

When God plants an idea in someone stand back and watch what happens. For Carol Kent *The Color of Sunshine* grew into another ministry, Speak Up for Hope (www.speakupforhope.org). For Tina, an artist, *The Color of Sunshine* and the roses became her inspiration to paint not one painting, but three. Additionally, she drinks more tea than ever and her husband, Billy, has become faithful to prepare a pot every afternoon.

Somewhere in between Tina's heart attack, the story, the yellow roses, tea, and learning more about women and heart disease the idea for **A Cup of Hope for Hearts** was born. The *how to* relate the cup of hope to women with heart disease didn't occur until the day I received samples of blooming teas. The title written on the package 'Let Love Bloom' captured my attention. I placed the blooming tea in the clear teapot and poured the hot water over it. Slowly, the dried white silver needle tea leaves began to unfold. I watched in amazement! Then, in the center of the tea leaves, a small beautiful red flower began to appear. From the inside of this flower came a small yellow flower. Right before my eyes God seemed to unfold a plan for a way to connect hearts and tea, and love and hope.

I've asked Tina to share her side of the story before I give you more information about **A Cup of Hope for Hearts**.



"Hope Extended © 2006 by Tina Bradford"

The Mississippi Story . . . Tina's Participation

My first born son asked us one day, "What does yellow smell like?" That strange question from a four-year-old stuck in my mind. I've chucked to myself through the years over this simple child-belief. After all, how can color be anything but a visual stimulus? Forty years later, I finally realized what my son knew so early in life. Color can deeply touch our emotions—it can change our lives!

In 2005 I was eating in a restaurant one evening after downward spiraling heart events. The waiter left three crayons on the paper tablecloth. I began scribbling with the red, my favorite color. I left that evening with pieces of that tablecloth stuffed into my purse. As a result the painting, "Wear Red for Women's Hearts" was born.

After it's unveiling in 2005, many women wrote telling me how much support they felt through that artwork. The color 'red' has touched many of our lives changing us as a result.

Another year went by and the color "blue" was touching my soul. I was again experiencing one of those weeks where heart disease was showing me my life would never be normal again. And I was blue! Loving support was on the horizon again through two friends. One evening toward the end that "blue" week, I opened my front door and there on my dining room table was a huge vase holding 36 yellow roses. Gloria and Laura had given me more than just a gift of yellow roses. They had given me 'the gift of hope'. When I heard Carol's story and the love and support she received through yellow roses, I knew another color had touched me and was restoring my heart.

At that time I was struggling to complete a painting of a woman alone at a table. I just couldn't make it *work*. Suddenly it struck me, *she* needed a yellow rose and I had 36 at home to paint from. I quickly finished that painting and entitled it "Hope".

The night of my art opening a few weeks later, a woman came up and said she was buying the painting. She began to relate her story. She needed 'hope'! She began to question me about the two cups on the table, "Who were they for?"

Laura was present and listened to this woman share her story and her need for support. Here was another woman who needed support and a cup of hope in her life. After that night, Laura and I began weeks of discussion and prayer. We knew all of these seemingly events were pointing us in a direction. We believe now that direction involves sharing a cup of tea and transmitting the gift of hope, especially to women with heart disease. The colors 'red and yellow' do more than just affect our visual senses.

I still don't know what yellow smells like. But I know 'red and yellow' can move from the heart of one person to support and touch the heart of another. What does 'yellow' smell like to you?



"Gift of Hope © 2007 by Tina Bradford"



The **MISSION** of A Cup of Hope for Hearts is to:

- ♥ Bring women a cup of hope which is found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (John 3:16, Ephesians 4:4-6)
- ♥ Bring an awareness of the risks and dangers of heart disease and the need for education.
- ♥ Bring to the attention of women the benefits of drinking tea.
- ♥ Offer support for **WomenHeart** (www.womenheart.org) by holding fund raising teas, promoting membership, celebrate survival, and promote education.



Hosting A Red Dressy Tea Event

♥ Host an annual **WomenHeart** event in your area. There are many ways to coordinate this event: women's clubs, your area hospital's heart clinic, churches, civic organizations, and others.

♥ The following would be the standard invitation, theme, and suggested agenda for such events.

♥ Invitation:



A Red Dressy Tea



The remarkable **H**ear**t**--a vital organ indeed!
Each valve, artery, and vessel God did weave;

A muscle that pumps and makes the blood flow
From the top of your head to the tip of your toe.

The heart, a muscle that works unnoticed,
Is taken for granted by each one of us.

Healthy eating habits and heredity,
Play a part in your heart's functionality.

Together let's learn, support, celebrate—It's a necessity.
We'll share a *Cup of Hope for Hearts* at a **Red Dressy Tea**.

Written by Laura Leathers © 2007

You are cordially invited to attend the **WomenHeart** event on



Date:

Time:

Place:

Committees:

♥ With any event you want to establish chairpersons and various committees. Here a few committees you will need to form.

- Publicity & Tickets
- Table Hostesses
- Decorating & Tablescapes
- Budget & Sponsors (Corporate and Individual)
- Location
- Favors for Guests
- Catering & Food Service (be sure to make it heart health)
- Speaker & Program
- Share Fair Booths
- Clean Up

Decorating Theme:

♥ Using clear glass bowls where blooming tea has already been ‘activated’, or use a beautiful clear teapot and warmer. This would hold the blooming tea specifically chosen for **A Cup of Hope for Hearts**. If you order directly through Tea Time Treasures, we will offer a discount on your purchase specifically for this event.

♥ Red and Yellow tablesettings can be created with streamers, fabric, tissue paper, scrapbooking supplies. Be creative!

Program Agenda:

♥ Story of founding of WomenHeart

♥ Stories from the Heart (three to five women share their stories)

♥ Educational portion (physician speaker)

♥ The Story of Cups of Hope for Hearts (The Yellow Rose, WomenHeart, and Tea) as it provides support and education (and possibly fund-raising tool)

♥ Central to the event will be the one large vase of Yellow Roses. At a point in the program, all women from the audience who are heart disease survivors will be presented one of the yellow roses and another small token. (For example, Red Heart Dress pin or something similar to the support network coordinators pin).

♥ Sharing the Word:

♥ Write a Scripture verse on a die cut cardstock heart using Tina's list to be placed at each place setting. This will be a take home item for the attendees.

The following is a list of references in the Bible to the word Heart. Here are her top five verses the other 131 verses are in the PDF file ([click here](#)).

KJV [Psalm 31:24](#)

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

NIV [Psalm 73:26](#)

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

NIV [John 14:1](#)

[*Jesus Comforts His Disciples*] **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me.**

[1 John 3:20](#)

"For God is greater than our hearts"

[Psalm 119:112](#)

"My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end."

Tina's work with Women Heart (www.womenheart.org), The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease.



"Wear Red for Women's Hearts" oil painting by Tina Bradford

Painting presented to National Coalition for Women With Heart Disease - - National Conference - Chicago July 14, 2006

