

When the Universe conspires, it's a blessed day! ©

There I was, in the driver's seat, (so I thought- ha!), headed up to the annual L.A. Gift Show to search for an agency to represent Paws For Comfort®. I need to concentrate on creating the nonprofit Xolos for Chronic Pain™ (X-CPR)™ Service Dog Placement Program, and someone else marketing Paws would be a pawsitively huge relief.

Still, I didn't want to go; I desperately wanted to volunteer this same day at a local fundraiser at the Sports Arena, to be present with some very big personalities, such as Tony Robbins, Rev. Michael Beckwith, and others from The Secret, thinking maybe, just maybe, I would meet one of the speakers who could open the door for my missions. But despite my repeated, (apparently almost irritating efforts according to the fundraiser coordinator's attitude) to become a volunteer, the door was closed. Ok, so, I must be meant to find a different door. But I was still disappointed, thinking I had lost out on a big opportunity; I was so sure I was "supposed to be there".

I was tired, in pain, and overwhelmed about undertaking this trek to the massive show all by myself, carting a suitcase full of product on my right, and carrying Pink on my left, not to mention driving myself there and back. My younger sister, a craftsperson herself for 25 years, supportively warned me to brace myself for rejection, and not take it personally.

With Pink on my neck, my older sister's GPS on my windshield, and my younger sister's protective advice, I was armed with good intentions and set out.

Invited by a greeting card rep, who, though not able to represent me, offered a warm cloak of mentorship and gave me pearls of wisdom to make the most out of my efforts, I smiled to myself, through a grimace of total body pain, and sang Whitney Houston's song, Step by Step. Even Pink chimed in, her head high crooning, looking like a little bird whose mother was giving her a worm.

I knew I was meant to go; by this point, too many things had fallen into place that pointed a clear direction to ignore my body and fears, and go anyway. I have great faith in the signs Spirit so lovingly gives me, that is, when I can be open enough to receive them. And this time, I clearly was!

When Pink and I arrived in L.A., later than I planned, we immediately went to find my “Mentor Rep” Caryle. She was kind enough to look over my packet of marketing materials, and gave me nods of approval which immediately garnered some self-confidence.

Caryle told me what rooms to market to, and also introduced me personally to an agency she trusted. I was fortunate to have this expert person look over my cards and products and give me honest, constructive and yes, encouraging feedback, about the viability of Paws. At the end, she described the changes I would need to make for her to carry my line, and thanking her, I said that her type of “no” was as good as a yes! Very helpful, very positive, and very promising.

So, I left my meeting with her, and went on to the rest of the stores, thinking that I probably would not find a rep, but convinced myself the experience would be good practice. Sort of a “target marketing survey” of reps. I was in a lot of pain, but I knew I couldn’t give up and go home just yet.

I passed a store that had nothing to do with my product line, but the presentation of products was so irresistible that I found myself dragging my suitcase and Pink into it. I was looking at their display, literally from floor to ceiling of beautiful bright and shiny ornaments. Behind me, two female voices were cooing to Pink, asking her if she had talked to Betty White? I answered for Pink, though she had already given her look of “I don’t think so”, and said no, passing it off as just a comment about Betty White being such an animal advocate and a dog lover.

Leaving the store a few minutes later, I was standing by the elevator waiting to go to another floor, when two women came up to Pink and I, asking if we were going to see Betty White? I didn't know Betty was going to be there. I exclaimed, "aren't you the two women who just asked me that?" To which they replied "no". Perplexed, but realizing it was no coincidence now that two *other* people asked me about Betty White, that I asked with wonder "Is Betty White HERE????"

Yes, she sure was, signing "ornaments" from that fairyland store by which I was just mesmerized.

Everyone in the elevator got very excited, and promptly escorted us directly to where Betty was. Such kind and excited people! They seemed to know something really big would happen by Pink meeting Betty!

As we were waiting in line, watching everyone bring their ornaments up to Betty to sign, cameras flashing, I was nervously thinking, "ok what do I give her, what do I say?" I was getting so flustered and nervous, realizing Pink didn't have her "best photo op outfit" on! And I looked, well, let's not go there.

So I took out my marketing packet, discarded the wholesale order form, as I doubted she would be needing that, and plopped in a promo DVD for Paws For Comfort® and X-CPR™ I had packed at the very last minute. I couldn't think of why I would need that at this kind of event, but something told me I would need "just one".

When I was next in line, about to step forward, it dawned on me that Pink, in her service dog vest and her butterfly pj's made lovingly by a woman I placed a Xolo with, could bring Betty this big white envelope herself!

In my rush and nervousness, I handed it to Pink, *upside down*, and Pink began dragging it over, spilling all the contents as she walked up to Betty. It was hilarious, as you will see in the photos. Later I realized this was no accident either.

Cameras were flashing, lights were flashing, people were “awwing” and I had my first experience of what it is like to have the paparazzi around!

As Pink approached Betty, Betty stood up, with a look of utter disbelief and wonder, which is captured in one of the precious photos. I took the empty envelope from Pink, started picking up the contents, and then pointed to my business card, and asked Pink to “give it to her”, as Betty’s hand extended out. Pink, of course, with her middle name “Golden”, being the Golden Retriever that she is, got the card and waltzed over to Betty and gave it to her. The crowd went wild! There were so many fast clicks of the camera and lights flashing, I was suspended in a moment of disbelief myself.

When I picked Pink up to show her to Betty, Betty’s expression was amazing: pure, unconditional love. She closed her eyes as she held Pink, as if transmitting mutually the deep love and knowing that passes between humans and dogs (well, all animals for that matter). There is no doubt Betty’s heart is full of deep love and respect for animals.

Betty, holding Pink, asked her for a kiss. Pink being a true-blue-loyal- mama’s girl, refused! I was horrified!! So I took Pink back in my arms and asked her to give Betty a kiss, which she did on command, *twice*- to make it up to me. Betty closed her eyes and purred, “she gave me a kiss!” as if it was the greatest gift anyone had given her, that first kiss. It was so sweet. I think Pink enjoyed it, too. Betty is as sweet as she looks.

While Betty was signing the ornament, I told her that Pink was my handicapped, 3 legged service dog, helping me with chronic neck pain from Fibromyalgia by sitting on my neck as a heating pad. A 24/7 no microwave HOT DOG! Her mouth literally dropped and no sound came out. I then handed her the packet and said I realized she was busy now, so this was for her to read later, to tell her of my causes.

She looked at me right in the eye, nodding her head, and assured me SEVERAL times that she would read EVERY word of the packet. I was so touched by the sincerity in her eyes, and the knowing nod she gave me to convey that she understood the importance of the word “cause”.

It wasn't until we stepped away from the signing desk that I understood why I had “accidentally” given Pink the envelope upside down. Betty stopped me and asked if I would give my business card to her secretary, pointing to the sidelines, which gave me a segue to talk to the secretary, who had already scooped up the envelope without our noticing.

Her secretary was as sweet as Betty, taking the time and interest in hearing more of my story and Pink's, watching Pink retrieve the cell phone (which I think Betty caught, as I noticed her looking at us a few times with a big smile and a bit of awe again). I showed her secretary my greeting cards, which she just loved. We spoke with another woman who had her own disability, and we all three exchanged our own stories.

The doors have just swung open in a big way! I believe *this* is the door we have been waiting for, making *great* history, *promising* history, *Paws for the Record* history.

Nancy, Toaster, and of course, Pink
See Betty with Pink at:

<https://www.collages.net/consumersite/guestlogin.aspx?username=mart08&password=18948> or contact www.southbaystudio.com

Epilogue

Betty White's endorsement of Paws & Effect: The Healing Power of Dogs, the book that published a chapter on our story and the Xolos, is on the back cover of the book! I had made a copy of the chapter (with publisher permission of course) and had put them in all the marketing packets I took to the Gift Show, not knowing that I would be giving it to Betty.

I asked the author and X-CPR board member, Sharon Sakson, to send me an autographed copy to Betty so I could include it in my follow up package to Betty, letting her know she has just met someone (and her dog) featured in the manuscript she endorsed! Truly a world of 6 degrees of separation 😊

Several weeks after sending Betty the package, I received a sweet, handwritten letter in reply. Betty loved the Paws For Comfort® products and our mission! She gave me permission to use her photos with Pink in a book called Disabled Pets and the People Who Love Them, coming out Sept. 2008, published by Word Forge Books. What a blessed day!