



# The Right Words At the Right Time

By Marlo Thomas, Friends

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For everyone who needs a hero or loves a good story, here is an inspiring collection of personal revelations from more than 100 remarkable men and women who share a moment when words changed their lives.

Award-winning actress and bestselling author Marlo Thomas is joined by such luminaries as Muhammad Ali, Tom Brokaw, Cal Ripken Jr., Steven Spielberg, Venus Williams, Rudy Giuliani, Toni Morrison, Jack Nicholson, Mel Brooks, Laura Bush, Billy Crystal, Tom Wolfe and Katie Couric, who each tell a story of a crucial turning point in their lives brought about by the right words at the right time. These first-person accounts of challenges and victories can provide guidance to all of us as we come to life's crossroads.

Al Pacino and Gwyneth Paltrow were instructed by words they heard during a crisis. Billy Crystal and Chris Rock used their humor to guide them. Ruth Bader Ginsburg received advice from her mother-in-law on her wedding day that continues to help her on the Supreme Court. These original stories encompass life's struggles and adventures and demonstrate how people we admire found hope and inspiration through words delivered by family or friends, heard in a movie or play, sung on the radio, told in a joke or even drawn in a cartoon.

*The Right Words at the Right Time* gathers the wit and wisdom of more than 100 innovators, thinkers and cultural icons and puts them into one collectible book.

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## **The Right Words At the Right Time By Marlo Thomas, Friends Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### From the Publisher

Share your own story for possible inclusion in an all new volume of The Right Words at the Right Time!

Was there a moment when words changed your life? Whether they were spoken to you by a family member or friend; whether you read them in a book; whether you heard them in a movie or on the radio; we'd like you to share your story. Selected entries will be included in a forthcoming book of stories compiled by Marlo Thomas.

### About the Author

**Marlo Thomas** graduated from the University of Southern California with a teaching degree. She is the author of five bestselling books, *Free to Be ...You and Me*, *Free to Be...a Family*, *The Right Words at the Right Time*, *Thanks and Giving: All Year Long*, and *The Right Words at the Right Time Volume 2: Your Turn!* Ms. Thomas has won four Emmy Awards, a Golden Globe, a Grammy, the Peabody Award, and has been inducted into the Broadcasting Hall of Fame for her work in television, including her starring role in the landmark series *That Girl*, which she also conceived and produced. She is the National Outreach Director for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. Ms. Thomas lives in New York with her husband, Phil Donahue.

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## **Foreword**

"Tell me a fact and I'll learn. Tell me a truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever."

-- *Indian Proverb*

When I was a child I loved to watch my father shave. I sat on the closed toilet seat and marveled at the sound of the razor gliding over his face, pushing aside the foamy soap like a shovel in the snow. I adored him, this grand figure who slapped lotion on his cheeks every morning, buttoned his clean white shirt and hugged me good-bye.

Once, my father made a movie with Margaret O'Brien and he often took me to the set. I would cue his lines as we drove to the MGM studios with the windows open and the heady mix of Old Spice and a Cuban cigar swirling about us as we carried on a kind of rehearsal in transit. On the set I played jacks with Margaret between takes, and when the bell rang, I would join the crew in their silence as the cameras rolled and the boom mike moved into position to record the dialogue I knew by heart.

I was in awe of my father and sinfully envious of Margaret O'Brien. I wore pigtails. I wanted freckles. I wanted to be Margaret O'Brien. Ten years later, at age seventeen, I got my chance.

I played the lead in Gigi in a summer stock production at the Laguna Playhouse south of Los Angeles. The excitement of finally being a real actress was painfully short-lived. All the interviews and all the reviews focused on my father. Would I be as good as my father? Was I as gifted, as funny? Would I be as popular? I was devastated.

I loved my father; my problem was Danny Thomas.

"Daddy," I began, "please don't be hurt when I tell you this. I want to change my name. I love you but I don't want to be a Thomas anymore."

I tried not to cry during the long silence. And then he said, "I raised you to be a thoroughbred. When thoroughbreds run they wear blinders to keep their eyes focused straight ahead with no distractions, no other horses. They hear the crowd but they don't listen. They just run their own race. That's what you have to do. Don't listen to anyone comparing you to me or to anyone else. You just run your own race."

The next night as the crowd filed into the theater, the stage manager knocked on my dressing room door and handed me a white box with a red ribbon. I opened it up and inside was a pair of old horse blinders with a little note that read, "Run your own race, Baby."

*Run your own race, Baby.* He could have said it a dozen other ways: "Be independent"; "Don't be influenced by others." But it wouldn't have been the same. He chose the right words at the right time. The old horse blinders were the right gift. And all through my life, I've been able to cut to the chase by asking myself, "Am I running my race or somebody else's?"

The impact those words had on me made me wonder if others had such words too. What follows on these pages are the stories that changed the lives of more than one hundred remarkable people who responded to my invitation to reach back into their own lives in search of that moment when words made all the difference. Each one is a brief glimpse into the heart, a moment of awakening, a lightbulb that revealed a truth that has stayed with them for a lifetime, or a challenge that moved them to action. Muhammad Ali responded to a teacher's assertion that he "ain't never gonna be nuthin'." Billy Crystal, Walter Cronkite, Katie Couric and Kenneth Cole also received words of discouragement that goaded them on to achievement. The right words moved Al Pacino to pull out of a downward spiral. Paul McCartney's words came in a dream; Steven Spielberg's came from Davey Crockett. Chris Rock's words, like mine, came from his father; Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's from her mother-in-law on the eve of her wedding. Rudolph Giuliani, Cindy Crawford and Gwyneth Paltrow heard the words that changed their lives during a moment of crisis. Itzhak Perlman spent his entire career, almost forty years, living by a single, eight-letter word first spoken to him by a Russian music teacher when he was ten years old.

All of these stories confirmed something I've always suspected: that whether we know it or not, each of us carries our own unique slogan, a custom-made catchphrase that resonates throughout our lives.

The royalties from this book will help fund research now underway at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the hospital my father founded in 1962. Along with our Nobel laureate Dr. Peter Doherty, our talented physicians, researchers and nurses strive every day to save the lives of children who come to our doors from all over the world and who are never turned away because of a family's inability to pay.

I thank the men and women who offered their stories for this book on behalf of the children, and with the hope that their right words at the right time would be just that to someone else.

And I thank my father for all his words that continue to live in my heart.

Marlo Thomas

New York City

Spring, 2002

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Peter Pitts:**

People live in this new moment of lifestyle always aim to and must have the time or they will get large amount of stress from both lifestyle and work. So , when we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not only a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to you actually of course your answer can unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, often the book you have read will be The Right Words At the Right Time.

#### **Charles Siegrist:**

This The Right Words At the Right Time is great publication for you because the content and that is full of information for you who all always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. That book reveal it data accurately using great plan word or we can say no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but tough core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having The Right Words At the Right Time in your hand like having the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous one. We can say that no e-book that offer you world in ten or fifteen tiny right but this book already do

that. So , this is good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt which?

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