

## No Limits

By Kathy Buckley



Kathy Buckley was erroneously sent to a school for the mentally disabled.

She nearly flunked out of high school.

She tried to commit suicide several times.

She was run over.

She was told she'd never walk again.

She was diagnosed with cervical cancer.

Yet, when the hearing-impaired comedian walked onto the Main Platform stage, her message to attendees was one of hope.

"There are no limits to what any of us can do with our lives," she said.

Joking about hardships as she shared the story of her life, Buckley described a difficult childhood in which no one realized she was hearing impaired until she was 8 years old.

After that, she was put into the proper class, where the formerly silent girl began to learn to speak.

Pulled out of that class too soon and sent to public school, Buckley had difficulty fitting in, and began to steal and act out to gain attention.

Feeling miserable and misunderstood, she tried to commit suicide five times.

"Everyone wants to be successful," she told the audience, "but there are going to be some things I'm not successful at. And there's not a day that goes by where I don't thank God for letting me fail at least five different times."

After leaving high school, Buckley suffered another setback.

While sunbathing on a beach, she was run over by a lifeguard's Jeep.

Officially pronounced dead at the scene, Buckley told the audience, "I saw life after death. I spent the first 20 years of my life looking for three things: love, warmth and acceptance.

When I died, I got a love that's out of this world.

A warmth of knowing that I am totally protected, and totally unconditional acceptance.

"And then," she continued, "I was given a fourth gift. A gift no one had ever told me about. And that was the gift of choice.

Something, someone, loved me so much they let me make the decision as to whether I was to go or stay."

Those few moments changed Buckley's life.

Throughout the next five years, as she struggled to recover, she held onto the gifts she discovered that day.

"The doctors told me I'd never walk again," she joked, "but I didn't hear them."

### **Rising above the labels**

Overcoming obstacles others put in her path when they labelled her, telling her what she couldn't achieve, taught Buckley not to take others at face value.

"I never make judgements about people," she told attendees. "I learned this at the school for the disabled. In that school, there were no judgments passed.

In that school, it wasn't what you couldn't do, but what you could do.

In that school, it wasn't the value of words and communication but what your heart had to say."

"I've also learned," she continued, "that we are in control of our destiny. We are in control of our individuality. If we live only for the acceptance of others, you will not grow.

To live with the labels other people put on you is not how you're going to succeed.

Each and every one of us has the most precious present instilled in our chest.

I believe that when we're born, in our heart, there's a gift.

And in that gift is your destiny.

Only you, as an individual, can give that gift to the universe.

But you will never find it if you look for acceptance in all the wrong places.

That acceptance comes from within you. And when you find it, the lid of that gift will come off and you will succeed in anything you want in your life.

“Make the right choices for yourself,” Buckley concluded. “Watch the words that come out of your mouth, for they can limit you or they can make you succeed.

It is your choice to make your life a blessing or a curse.

My prayer for you is that you make it a blessing.”