

## Camilla on Legacy

“Cami, you should write a book about your life. It is so fascinating.” Time after time I have heard this, and eventually believed it. I planned to write a collection of memoirs. As I began, I found I was writing for my children and broader family. I want to overwrite any stories about young life with good works and intentions, to improve the mind and body to serve others.

Looking back on choices, I think there is an interesting pattern: education; aesthetic attraction; and shifts to apply my learnings to help others.

I believe my first adult-like choice was to study Electron Microscopy. It opened a new world – of cheap thrills! I love looking at the unseeable, working with liquid nitrogen, and coating specimens with 600 angstroms of gold. I had the choice of learning applications in physics, metallurgy, and biology. I spent time in each but was drawn to biological applications. And this led me to Health Care, Johnson & Johnson and Becton Dickinson.

I added a degree, an MBA, to adjust to my new corporate environment. I wanted to be influential and not a drone. Unexpectedly, this led me to the investment community. My firm wanted me to be a generalist and invest in semiconductors and portable phones. I couldn't see why one would invest in technology for its sake when you had the opportunity to invest in health care. And this is why I left venture capital after four years.

My enthusiasm about investing in new technology was somewhat cavalier. It made the decision to have an amniocentesis in my first pregnancy too easy. A late amnio introduced bacteria into the amniotic sac and I lost our healthy son in a still birth that nearly took my life. I became serious about advancing maternal health, but one can imagine how difficult that was. The exploration brought me to real advances in drug development and discovery.

I wanted to change fields and was envious of others who were working in more “fun areas”. After going back to school for an MFA at age 53, I launched a fashion label. Still, I gravitated to helping women dress better for success, to find better fitting clothes.

I love the thrill of making connections; to relive small world discoveries. I believe it is all about recognizing we are all human and walk the same paths.

I am now writing for the first time in my life to share what I have learned. I intend to add other values and describe how I have or haven't been influenced by them.

The three pillars that allow me to live a good life are:

1. Improve the human condition,
2. Keep educating yourself; go back for a degree late in life, and
3. Keep loving and forgiving yourself and those around you.

I separate legacy from material objects. I am in the process of

- paring down what I don't need,

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- giving away my NYFW runway collection, mostly gifted now,
- gifting art as I draw it,
- selling my engagement ring, and
- giving my sister the silver I received from our grandmother.

I wonder about sharing my writings; who should read this?

I have asked some to read my essay on Spirituality. I didn't feel an earthquake by opening up in this way. I think about adding these writings to my personal website. No marketing, but to let my family find it, and any others who might be interested.

I have loved much of my life and when the time comes to leave it, I hope to do so with love and gratitude.