



## A Poem for Olivia

The sunrise on Wednesday January 29, 2014 was a gift – even an answer to prayer. When Shannon called on Tuesday night to tell us she was pregnant, thoughts and feelings came so fast I couldn't sort them out. But I knew there was fear – and I knew I didn't want it. So my prayer was simply: "Take this fear away."

It didn't happen that night – and in the morning it was still there. I knew that fear wasn't the only thing I was feeling, so I turned to the "Emotional Ladder."<sup>1</sup>

The Emotional Ladder is a numbered list of 22 emotional states from #1 (Joy, Knowledge, Empowerment, Freedom, Love, Appreciation) to #22 (Fear, Grief, Depression, Despair, Powerlessness). It's the best tool I've ever found for helping me to understand what I'm feeling and to climb out of the places where I don't want to be.

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<sup>1</sup> Hicks, Esther and Jerry. *Ask and It is Given*

### EMOTIONAL LADDER

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Joy / Knowledge / Empowerment / Freedom / Love / Appreciation</li><li>2. Passion</li><li>3. Enthusiasm / Eagerness / Happiness</li><li>4. Positive Expectation / Belief</li><li>5. Optimism</li><li>6. Hopefulness</li><li>7. Contentment</li></ol>	<p>POSITIVE LEARNING</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. Boredom</li><li>9. Pessimism</li><li>10. Frustration / Irritation / Impatience</li><li>11. "Overwhelment"</li><li>12. Disappointment</li><li>13. Doubt</li><li>14. Worry</li><li>15. Blame</li><li>16. Discouragement</li></ol>	<p>NEUTRAL</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>17. Anger</li><li>18. Revenge</li><li>19. Hatred / Rage</li><li>20. Jealousy</li><li>21. Insecurity / Guilt / Unworthiness</li><li>22. Fear / Grief / Depression / Despair / Powerlessness</li></ol>	<p>NEGATIVE LEARNING</p>

So, when I woke up that morning and realized I was still feeling a deep sense of concern, I started with #22, fear, – and soon realized that I also felt powerless in the situation. But then I moved quickly from #21 to #14 because I felt no insecurity, guilt, unworthiness, jealousy, hatred, rage, revenge, anger, discouragement, or blame.

I stopped when I got to #14, because I knew that I was definitely worried.

However, as soon as I saw that word, I remembered all that I've learned over the years about the uselessness of worry – and I found myself smiling a bit. “Just let it go!” And I did.

I also skipped over #13, doubt . . . but when I got to disappointment, #12, I realized that was the whole problem, right there. I'm so disappointed about so many things, and I can easily get stuck there if I'm not careful.

The last terrible disappointment was in September 2013 when I heard that Shannon and Jeff, both recovering alcoholics, had relapsed. I spent a few minutes revisiting the pain of those few weeks and found that after shedding a few tears, I was able to move on up the ladder until I saw #6 – hope!

And that's where I stopped. I was not quite ready to feel optimism, (#5) . . . but I know it will come – as will positive expectation, belief, enthusiasm, eagerness and happiness.

When I saw #2, passion, I realized that would come when I see my fourth grandchild – and that joy, knowledge, empowerment, freedom, love, and appreciation will all follow naturally.

So there I was, at 6:30 in the morning, having moved from fear to hope, without any real effort at all. That's when the miracle happened: I looked out the window and saw that the sky to the east was entirely pink and blue! Once again I cried, but they were tears of joy this time.

I left the RV and walked outside to make sure I had some pictures. And as I walked along the shore of the lake, I couldn't shake the line . . . “You live in the sunrise . . .”

## For Olivia

You live in the sunrise  
The dawn of a new day  
a chance to start over.

You hold the promise of tomorrow  
and we have only to dream.

Bring us your wisdom  
your joy  
your love.

Grandma Bette – January 29, 2014



Revised: July 7 when "Shannon's Pregnant" became "Olivia" ... a girl! ... and October 23 when Olivia was two weeks old and the feeling of "hope" had turned to "joy"!