Hi, I would like to share a little of my story in the hopes that my story my inspire you to follow your dreams. I have overcome many obstacles in my life; but I am still here, ever evolving, ever learning, and reaching my goals.

In October 2001, I left an abusive marriage. I was a stay at home mother and homemaker since 1994, so my options to advance and gain meaningful employment without furthering my education were limited. Years of costly litigation, hidden assets, and withholding of support left me financially devastated. Years of verbal abuse left me not knowing who I was and second guessing all the decisions I made.

The one thing I was sure of is that college has always been a dream of mine. A friend suggested that I follow my heart. The next day I was college student and two weeks later I received my G.E.D. Since I have enrolled in college I have achieved a number of academic accomplishments; a few include a 3.86 G.P.A for my A.S. degree, a 4.0 G.P.A. for my A.A. degree, I am on the President's List, and the National Dean's List. Currently, I am on the student advisory committee, am a member of Phi Theta Kappa (an international honors society), and enrolled in Honors College. I am enjoying the opportunity to be a good role model for my child.

Oliver Wendell Homes once said, *"A mind that is stretched to a new idea never returns to its original dimension."* I am glad that I have found his words to be true. Many of the changes have been painful and a lot of work, but the rewards are priceless.

Thank you Millennium Women Foundation for helping me reach my goals!

JCiraco