



Chicken Soup for the Military Wife's Soul: 101 Stories to Touch the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit (Chicken Soup for the Soul)

By Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Charles Preston

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A tribute to the women who uphold the written and unwritten oaths of service and of marriage.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Jack Canfield is co-creator of the Chicken Soup for the Soul® series, which includes forty *New York Times* bestsellers, and coauthor of *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*. He is a leader in the field of personal transformation and peak performance and is currently CEO of the Canfield Training Group and Founder and Chairman of the Board of The Foundation for Self-Esteem. An internationally renowned corporate trainer and keynote speaker, he lives in Santa Barbara, California.

Mark Victor Hansen is a co-founder of Chicken Soup for the Soul.

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The Commissary Roadblock

Time is a dressmaker specialized in alterations.

-Faith Baldwin

It was just another harried Wednesday afternoon trip to the commissary. My husband was off teaching young men to fly. My daughters went about their daily activities knowing I would return to them at the appointed time, bearing among other things, their favorite fruit snacks, frozen pizza, and all the little extras that never had to be written down on a grocery list. My grocery list, by the way, was in my 16-month-old daughter's mouth, and I was lamenting the fact that the next four aisles of needed items would have to come from memory.

I was turning onto the hygiene/baby aisle while extracting the last of my list out of my daughter's mouth when I nearly ran over an old man. He clearly had no appreciation for the fact that I had forty-five minutes left to finish the grocery shopping, pick up my four-year-old from tumbling class, and get to school, where my twelve-year-old and her carpool mates would be waiting.

The man was standing in front of the soap selection, staring blankly as if he'd never had to choose a bar of soap in his life. I was ready to bark an order at him when I realized there was a tear on his face. Instantly, this grocery aisle roadblock transformed into a human.

“Can I help you find something?” I asked. He hesitated, and then told me he was looking for soap.

“Any one in particular?” I continued.

“Well, I’m trying to find my wife’s brand of soap.” I was about to loan him my cell phone so he could call her when

he said, “She died a year ago, and I just want to smell her again.”

Chills ran down my spine. I don’t think the 22,000-pound mother of all bombs could have had the same

impact. As tears welled up in my eyes, my half-eaten grocery list didn't seem so important. Neither did fruit snacks or frozen pizza. I spent the remainder of my time in the commissary that day listening to a man tell the story of how important his wife was to him—and how she took care of their children while he fought for our country.

My life was forever changed that day. Sometimes the monotony of laundry, housecleaning, grocery shopping and taxi driving leave military wives feeling empty—the kind of emptiness that is rarely fulfilled when our husbands don't want to or can't talk about work. We need to be reminded, at times, of the important role we fill for our family and for our country. Every time my husband comes home too late or leaves before the crack of dawn, I try to remember the sense of importance I felt in the commissary.

Even a retired, decorated World War II pilot who served in missions to protect Americans needed the protection of the woman who served him at home.

Paige Swiney

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