



Superman - The Real Christopher Reeves

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Christopher Reeve was born into a wealthy family in 1952. Reeve excelled academically, athletically, and onstage. His good looks and determination combined with an excellent education led to his 1978 starring role in the big budget film Superman for which he was best known.

Besides his many acting roles, his involvement in sports and philanthropy helped him to build relationships with people from many walks of life along the way.

In 1985, despite his allergy to horses, he learned how to ride for the film Anna Karenina. Four years later he was involved in eventing activities and subsequently purchased a twelve-year-old American thoroughbred horse.

On May 27, 1995 Reeves was competing in the Commonwealth Dressage and Combined Training Association finals when his horse suddenly stopped before jumping at the third fence. Christopher fell, landing on his head and shattered both of his first and second vertebrae. He was immediately paralyzed from the neck down and his breathing was halted. Surgery was performed to re-connect his skull and spine, but he required a wheelchair and portable ventilator to breathe for the rest of his life.

Reeve's money, good looks and experience couldn't protect him from a horrible life situation! At first, he was unconscious and, after he woke up and realized what had happened, he went into a deep depression, talking with his wife, Dana, about suicide. She stated that she would support him in life but refused to discuss euthanasia again.

Reeve's adopted a positive attitude and from the time of the accident to his death in 2004, exercised regularly, directed movies and worked for the benefit of others. He and his wife, Dana, set up a Foundation and lobbied for research and advocated for disabilities. He also began giving speeches, interviews and assisted with the writing of two books.

Christopher Reeve has set an example for everyone. His accident totally changed his life, but he didn't let it stop him from living!

All of us face difficult times in our lives and feel vulnerable when we perceive that we have lost control. Not everyone, however, experiences problems and then faces life with new eyes and an attitude that moves forward with positivity.

When Thanksgiving arrives, each year we often give thanks for the things that we appreciate - home, family, health and work, while, at the same time, lamenting what we do not have. Often, we think about how we might have failed in some area or not measured up to our idea of how we could have or should have been a "Superman".

This year give thanks for the things that you haven't lost. Consider the example of Christopher Reeves and think about how you can travel on different pathways despite the problems that you have had. Go even further and give thanks for the troubles themselves because difficulties help us to develop perseverance and perseverance develops character.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!