

The Freedom of Flight — A Butterfly's Metamorphosis

by Caryn Summers



Once upon a time, a small, fuzzy caterpillar burst out of the egg that many of us call "nursing school." She was proud to be in the world of service, thrilled to be helping others. As the caterpillar looked around, she saw several crawlers like herself, moving in unison and curing for sick and injured ants, bees, and other insects.

She and the other caterpillars seemed to be family, each supporting the other, quietly working together. At times, she

was asked to join in life-saving techniques that required great knowledge. She became more skilled, learning how to splint an ant's antennae and how to care for a dying bee that had lost its stinger. She was proud.

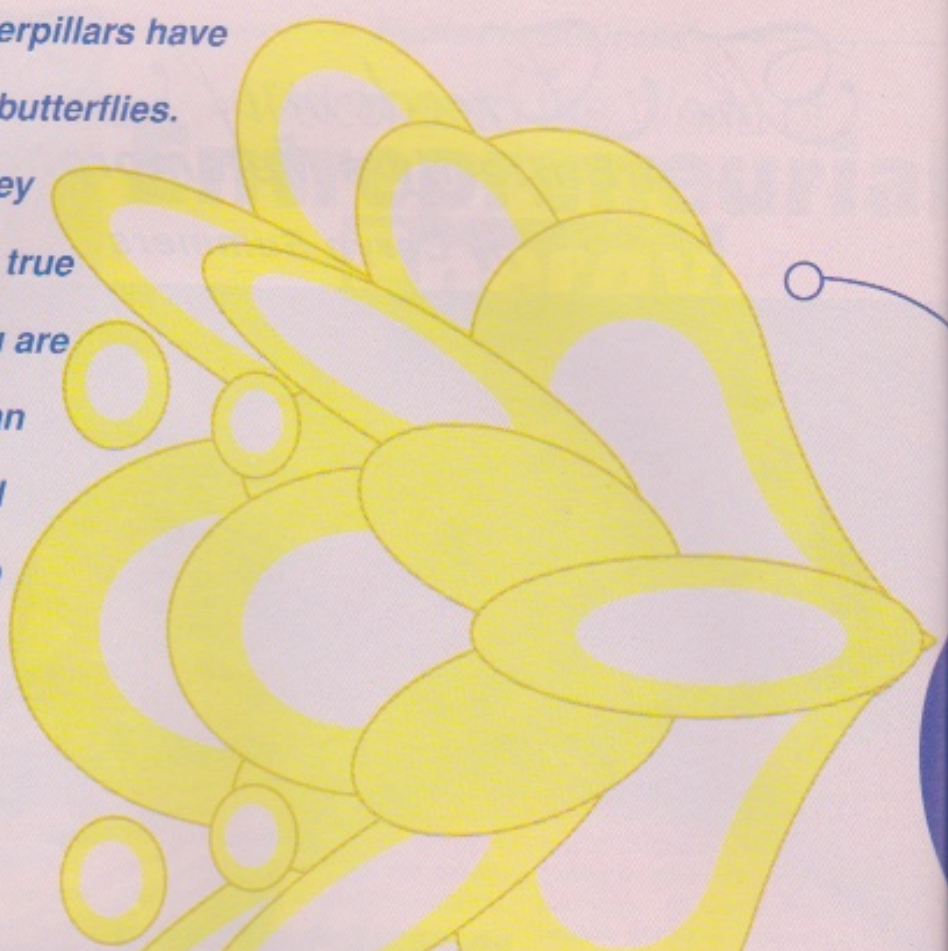
The small fuzzy caterpillar worked hard, often returning to her little leaf home at night exhausted, too tired to visit the other leaves on the big tree. She became lonely.

She would try to talk to others about her loneliness, but there was no time; everyone was too busy helping other creepy crawlers. "I know much about helping others," the caterpillar sighed, "but I don't know much about the world out there, or how to help myself."

The small fuzzy caterpillar began to dread going to work. She was tired and work was no place to rest. She would hear other caterpillars bickering and complain-

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ing and sometimes, just to fit in, she would join in the gossip. Something was wrong. Inside, she felt an uncomfortable stirring, a strange desire to move on. But where? This was the only life she knew. The caterpillar realized she no longer felt content working among the other caterpillars; she yearned for a safe place where she could learn who she really was.

One evening, the caterpillar was crawling home. It had been a difficult day — a worm had been cut in half by Farmer Jones' dreaded pitchfork and microsurgery had failed. Now, the worm would live as an amputee, and there were no crawlchairs available.

Suddenly, a great winged creature flew by. The caterpillar looked up at the magnificent display of color on the butterfly's enormous wings. She heard the butterfly call to her, "Trust the process. It is time to go within." She took a deep breath and, crawling past her familiar leaf, continued on toward an unknown destination.

In the moonlight, she spotted a fallen log. A brown caterpillar was hanging upside down, trapped in some kind of matted fuzz. The small fuzzy caterpillar hastened to help him, a natural reaction for one so caring, but the brown caterpillar chuckled at her and explained, "This is what caterpillars have to do to become butterflies. We have to journey within to find our true colors."

"But why do you want to become a butterfly?" she asked the caterpillar, who seemed to be spinning a new gray home.

"Because when you are a butterfly, you can really be free," he said. "And then you can help others to become free."

The fuzzy caterpillar remembered the beautiful butterfly that had called to her: "Trust the process. It is time to go within." She remembered the love she felt in her heart when she saw that magnificent creature. If she went within herself, she wondered, could she really become such a creation?

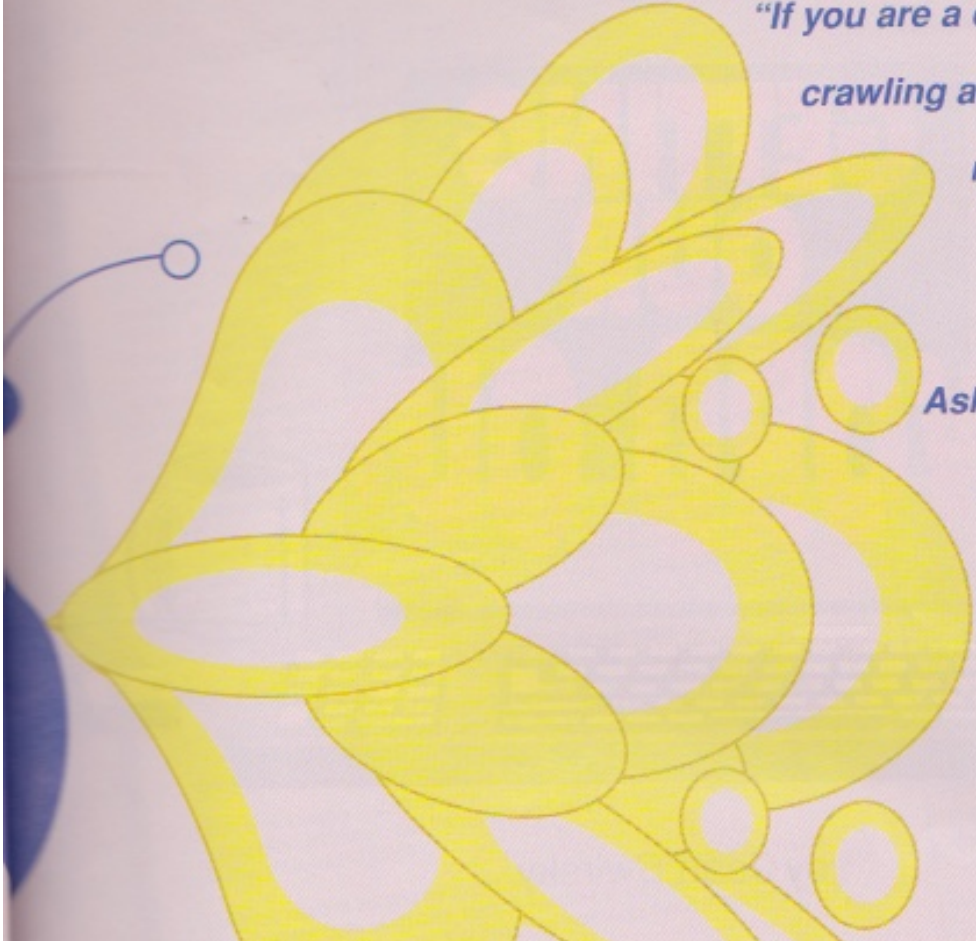
She crept up next to the caterpillar,

who was now in a house with no windows. "Trust the process," she reminded herself. Then, reaching within, she covered herself with a fiber that she had not even known was inside of her.

There, alone in the dark, she asked herself many questions: "What do I want in my life? How do I use my talents and skills? What are my talents and skills? How can I help? Who can help me?"

The small fuzzy caterpillar thought about what resources might be available to her and of those who could help her. She listed organizations she had heard about such as the National Nurses in Business Association, local colleges, the Small Business Association, and journals such as *REVOLUTION*. These resources would support her freedom and could teach her negotiation skills and business management. She was developing the patience she would need for her new world.

One day, she awoke from a deep sleep and tried to stretch. Her cocoon had grown smaller — or had she grown larg-



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er!" She looked down at the moist shawl that enveloped her body. As she pushed at her old boundaries, she broke out of the cocoon and slowly opened her arms. They had become incredible wings of brilliant color!

She looked around and saw many butterflies cheering her on as she flapped her new wings in preparation for her first flight. She took a deep breath and whispered, "Ready, Set, Go!" She jumped into the world of self-publishing with her first book. She was flying! It was exhilarating, frightening, and beautiful!

The small fuzzy caterpillar learned a new kind of service. She spoke nationally about "trusting the process" and breaking through personal limitations. She wrote other books and professional articles. At times, her wings would not support the distances she had to fly and she would call for help. Her friends became "the wind beneath her wings." Now, she was an entrepreneur!

She developed a whole network of

associate butterflies. Life was vast in the world of flight and she soon learned to cover even greater distances with the help of computer modems and e-mail.

Then, she realized, the time had come for her to give back to others what the brilliant butterfly had given to her so long ago — an opportunity to fly. The new entrepreneur butterfly she had become began to publish books by other nurses, assisting them in getting their messages to the insect world. She expanded her company from self-publishing into an official, incorporated publishing company. And, she found a business partner, someone who shared her vision of serving through the written and spoken work. She no longer flew solo!

Oh, the views from her flights! The colors she saw, the friends she met! What fun it was to network and meet others in the publishing and seminars world! At times, she did not know if she had enough financial resources to carry on, but she would remember the advice of the wise

butterfly of her distant past, "Remember to trust the process."

The entrepreneur butterfly met other butterflies in the field of nursing, all sharing their beautiful colors, some writing, some managing home-care programs, some who had found joy working with dying bees, sick ants, and wounded butterflies. But every butterfly was unique, beautiful, different, and most of all, they were free!

So if you are a caterpillar, tired of crawling and yearning to fly, remember — Trust the process. Go within. Ask for wind beneath your wings. And take the leap! The journey is the reward! ♦

*[Caryn Summers, R.N., is the founder of Commune-a-Key Publishing and Seminars. She is a national speaker and author of several books. Her latest book, *The Girl, the Rock, and the Water*, is a tale of personal growth. For information about books and seminars, call 800-983-0600.]*

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Synopsis - A greeting from the CEO of the national Nurses In Business Association.