

Perseverance in a joyful time of year



Margaret McDowell

“Courage doesn’t always roar, sometimes it’s the quiet voice at the end of the day whispering ‘I will try again tomorrow.’”

Mary Anne Radmacher

Hollywood embellishments and poetic license notwithstanding, “Joy” is an inspiring movie. Jennifer Lawrence received an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal of Joy Mangano in the 2015 drama.

Robert De Niro, Diane Ladd, Bradley Cooper and Virginia Madsen also star. According to Mangano, director David O. Russell based about half of the script on her own life and half on other inspiring women he has known.

Joy, a divorced mother of two living on Long Island, was an inventor her whole life. Her first product, which she created as a teen, was a lighted flea collar for dogs and cats, making them more visible to drivers at night. But she failed to patent the idea and it was popularized instead by a company that traditionally specialized in dog products.

The invention that changed her life was the Miracle Mop. In the film, Joy suffers cuts on her hands while mopping up a

spill from a broken wine glass on a sailboat. She falls asleep later, her hands wrapped in gauze, and awoken to the idea of a detachable, self-wringing mop whose cotton cleaning fibers can be laundered and reattached.

Joy develops the product in her father’s auto body shop and talks her way into a presentation to decision makers at QVC television network. The product is launched, poorly, by a man who has obviously never worked the business end of a mop and knows nothing about this one. Joy demands an opportunity to demonstrate the product herself, and does so successfully, selling 18,000 mops in her first presentation. She appears on television in the same clothes she

wears to mop at home, pants and a shirt, instead of in more sophisticated apparel. Her likability and familiarity with the product profoundly resonate with viewers.

Nothing deters her in her march to success: not family conflicts, overbilling from parts suppliers, or patent royalty disputes. A childhood friend and her ex-husband are among her most loyal supporters. Both stand by her through a series of difficult and complicated challenges.

Time.com notes that “Mangano sold Ingenious Designs LLC to the Home Shopping Network in 1999. ... As of today, she has more than 100 patents, including one for HSN’s best-selling product of all time, Hug-gable Hangers. Her net

worth is reportedly in the vicinity of \$50 million.”

Anyone who has ever overcome adversity and setbacks can relate to her story. Whether you’re a business owner, entrepreneur or a person with a successful career history, few of us enjoy even a measure of success without some trials and tribulations. It’s simply part of the deal.

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