

TURNING TRAGEDY INTO PURPOSE: HEIDI JOHNSON'S JOURNEY OF SERVICE AND CHANGE

Heidi Johnson's journey in the nonprofit world is a testament to the power of personal tragedy and transformation. Her path into philanthropy began in the wake of a devastating car accident that claimed the lives of her mother and two family friends, leaving her father in a coma. From that tragic event, Heidi found her calling in service. *"A year after the accident, my friend, Father John Sigler, asked for help where he worked at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He was the only chaplain for 300,000 children at CHLA, and he needed help,"* Heidi recalls. Together with a group of friends, they established the Spiritual Care Guild, a nonprofit organization designed to provide chaplains of all faiths at the hospital.

The founding of the Spiritual Care Guild in 2003 was a pivotal moment in Heidi's life. It marked the beginning of her lifelong commitment to service, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector. She describes how being part of this organization transformed her. *"Once you are part of a tiny cog in a very big wheel of helping others, well, there is no going back,"* she says. This experience led her to many more impactful projects, including the launch of Charity Matters, a platform dedicated to sharing the stories of nonprofit founders and their journeys of service.

Heidi's creation of Charity Matters in 2011 was born out of a desire to find and connect with other individuals who had used their pain to fuel a purpose greater than themselves. She explains, *"I launched the Charity Matters platform in 2011 to introduce my heroes to the world and share these amazing humans' stories—people who had healed through service and started organizations to serve humanity."* Since its inception, Heidi has interviewed hundreds of nonprofit founders, sharing their stories of hope, resilience, and impact. Her platform has grown into a podcast, now in its eighth season, with over 80 episodes that inspire others to make a difference.

In addition to her work in the nonprofit world, Heidi is also a mother of three sons. Her experience as a mother has deeply influenced her approach to service and philanthropy. *"Being a mom made me want to be better and do better,"* she says. Heidi's sons have been involved in various causes throughout their lives, and she takes pride in seeing how they have each found their own ways to give back. *"Our sons are now grown men, and they have each found their own way and time of giving back and using their gifts in different ways. All three boys have made a difference, and hopefully, they will continue to evolve in how they serve,"* she shares.

Heidi's latest project, her book *Change for Good*, focuses on the power of transforming ourselves for the benefit of others. In writing this book, Heidi was inspired by the idea that self-improvement should not only be for personal gain but also for the betterment of the



CHANGE for GOOD

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER
OF GIVING AS THE ULTIMATE CURE

HEIDI JOHNSON



world around us. *"I love a great self-help book, but I feel that most of these books are guiding us to make money or lose weight. I wanted to write about changing ourselves for good—not just our own good but for others,"* she explains. Heidi hopes that her readers will be inspired to take small steps toward helping others, believing that these tiny actions can create a ripple effect of positive change.

Reflecting on her own life, Heidi emphasizes that the power of small gestures has profoundly impacted her. She recalls the kindness she experienced after her mother's passing: *"People brought food, diapers, went to the market, stamped my Christmas cards that year—the list goes on and on. What seemed like tiny gestures of kindness made an enormous impact on me."* These acts of kindness have shaped Heidi's commitment to service, motivating her to dedicate her life to helping others in any way she can.

Over the years, Heidi has worked with countless nonprofit founders and change-makers, and she finds great joy in sharing their stories through Charity Matters. *"I think the most rewarding part of sharing these stories is helping the helpers get their stories out,"* she says. By bringing attention to the incredible work of these nonprofit founders, Heidi believes that she helps create a *"positive spiral of goodness"* that encourages others to get involved. She describes nonprofit founders as some of the most joyful and fulfilled individuals she has ever met, explaining that *"service is the silver bullet to life—it makes you feel better physically, emotionally, and socially."*

Balancing her many roles—nonprofit founder, storyteller, podcaster, mother—has been no easy feat, but Heidi believes that it all comes down to choices. *"There is no such thing as balance. It is all about choices,"* she states. Whether it was running a nonprofit while raising her sons or managing her blog and podcast, Heidi has always made choices that align with her values. She encourages others to do the same, advising that if you know what matters most to you, you will always make the right choices for yourself and those you love.

Heidi's passion for inspiring others to serve is clear in everything she does. Whether through her work with Charity Matters, her nonprofit leadership, or her writing, Heidi's mission is to show that we all have the capacity to make a difference. She concludes, *"We need to decide that we want to be good people and then act on that goodness. If I can inspire one person to get out there and help someone through whatever platform that is, then that is good enough for me."*



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