

STEPPING STONES

#1

I jumped from the edge of the river's bank onto the closest stepping stone peeking above the water. I was almost 21 years old. I was exhilarated to leave the safe embrace of my home and become a part of the flow of life by marrying my college boyfriend.

#2

I couldn't stay there long, however, as I needed more room for the three children I would have in the next six years. Gathering them all up, I quickly leaped to my second bigger stepping stone a bit further down the river. I was content on this family stepping stone for quite a long time. Ominously, the river suddenly became choppy and began to crash over me as I desperately tried to hang onto its security. But there was no way to save me from drowning unless I threw myself over to the divorce stepping stone looming in the distance.

#3

This third stepping stone was slippery, with jagged edges, and in the beginning I thought that at any moment I might easily slip into the murky waters, never to rise to the surface again. But after a while, the river calmed and the stepping stone held me safely within its grasp. However, just as I was adjusting to the stone's contours, I was fired from my job — company downsizing they said. Even though I diligently searched the waters day and night for a new job, I had almost given up hope when a smooth, round stone appeared. Not knowing what it might hold for me, I jettisoned myself onto its shore.

#4

This stepping stone allowed me the chance to grow more confidently in my role as a strong, single mother, professional, and woman. As I assumed more responsibilities, I blossomed and came to enjoy this wondrous stone. I stayed here until I realized I was nearing retirement and needed to prepare to leave this secure environment. Once again I had to begin looking for a stepping stone.

#5

One beautiful June morning I spied a glistening stone close to the river's bank and made an easy jump to it. At first I had a difficult time adjusting to its crevices and slippery surfaces, but I soon began to feel very much at home. The river flowed smoothly past me, the winds were light and breezy, and I began to enjoy looking at the river bank from my stone's vantage point. I could watch the oak tree's leaves change from green to gold to red and then flutter to the ground, leaving the bare brown branches clutching the sky. Soon the branches were covered in white, and the ground glittered with snowflakes.

#6?

Perhaps soon I will make my final leap and begin anew on the river's opposite bank, close to the oak tree I love to watch as it makes its own journey from green to gold to red to brown and then to white. I am beginning to feel confined here on this small stone and I have heard that there is a shining place on a hill not far from the shore called Seabury. I just need one final leap of faith and courage.

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