

## Wings of Love by Nipun Mehta

Love in action. We've all heard the cliché a million times but there's something about the way Nancy Rivard says it, that makes it reverberate in your heart for days to come. Maybe it's because she actually walks her talk and speaks with the confidence of experience; maybe it's because there is an uncanny sincerity in her demeanor; or maybe it's impossible to pinpoint any one particular reason.

Whatever the case, if you spend an evening with this World Woman of Peace (1999), you get a flavor of her infectious enthusiasm, a love affair with humanity that fills Nancy's heart and surrounds her

presence. "Like the in breath and the out breath," she says, "you gather the light and give it out. That's just the way it works."

Discover The Love

On Christmas Eve 1983, Nancy Rivard suddenly lost her father to cancer. "I wondered what life was about that it could be taken from us like that," she recalled. "I began to evaluate where I was going." Nancy purposely got herself demoted from the management track at American Airlines and went to work as a flight attendant. With low-cost travel passes and a flexible schedule, she toured around the world, searching for a calling -- for healing.

As a child, Nancy would write letters to "God" and submit them to her messenger -- the wind. In pursuit of understanding life and death, Nancy's travels took her to exotic places and provided incredible experiences and insights. She lived with the Hopi Indians, adopted a little girl in Sri Lanka, encountered healers in the Philippines, met with spiritual teachers in Thailand, Africa, India, Russia and the list goes on and on. But she kept on learning and re-learning the same answer. "Stop looking outside for teachers and answers. Look within, find yourselves in service and discover the love that is already within you," she says.

Power of One

Looking for a way that she could use her job as a flight attendant to serve the world, Nancy Rivard thought of an idea: volunteers could deliver medical supplies, school materials and plain old love to needy children in the United States and abroad, travelling at the same low fares airline employees receive. "I knew that if I could expose people to the types of helping experiences I'd had, they would find the same joy and

fulfillment," she says. Nancy wanted to share the love she was so vividly experiencing. Excited about her proposals, she took them to upper management, where she was working. But all her attempts were in vain.

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□□"To get rejected again and again was very tough," Nancy recalls. "I wanted to share love and awaken humanity to a higher connection with life but I didn't know how." But then she got yet another powerful message from a spiritual teacher -- think small, change yourself, know the power of one. So she did just that. Nancy began collecting sample-size hotel soaps and shampoos from her co-workers and delivering them to Bosnian refugees. The recipients were so grateful, they had tears of thankfulness and joy in their eyes. Following her first trip, two other flight attendants joined.

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□□Today, Airline Ambassadors has come a long ways. Through a dedicated network of partners and volunteers does everything from escorting children in need, hand-delivering humanitarian aid to orphanages, clinics, and remote communities, raising public awareness and involving youth in humanitarian efforts around the world. All this with incredibly low overhead. Nancy often tells friends, "When you do good work, doors keep opening."

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□□It's simple: love in action

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□□If you're really tuned in, Nancy's riveting stories coupled with an electrifying presence can just blow you off your seat. Here is a woman who has experienced instantaneous hurricanes when opening her arms to the sky and asking for help. A woman who has witnessed first-hand, breathtaking miracles, and who has been spontaneously cured of 36 gall bladder stones -- that's right, thirty-six -- without surgery. It's almost unbelievable. Even for Nancy.

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□□But you see, that's the thing about Nancy. Despite all her escapades, experiences and endeavors, she comes down to one basic thing: love in action. It's that simple. Everything comes down to that. While she used to travel the world seeking answers, she now looks to each present moment.

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□□"Each moment contains everything you ever need to know. If you're confused, it's simply because you don't have enough information," Nancy notes, "Just stay with it for a while and it'll clear up." And per Nancy's experience, when that confusion clears up, you naturally arrive at service to all. While before you might've thought of cleaning up your life and then doing service, now you realize that your personal life works itself out when you are focused on giving unconditional love in each moment. The tomorrow you were waiting for has never come and never will. Start now.

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□□Experiencing The Thunder

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□□One could rave on and on about the work that Nancy has inspired, about how she was on the back cover of Reader's Digest, is a World Woman of Peace, a Rotary fellow, an Ambassador for Peace and so on, but to really know her you must share her presence, and hear the thunder of love behind her voice.

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□□After searching for life's deeper meanings in all corners of the world, after meeting numerous sages and saints, after experiencing inexplicable phenomena, Nancy came to an understanding: she saw that the extra-ordinary lies in the ordinary, that joy comes in service, and that the potential of love resides in each action, every moment.

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□□ So when she says "love in action", it's no longer a cliché. It's an experience.  
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