



Strength Through Faith

Theresa Tremmel Anderson

1

Chapter One

Growing up with a rare skin condition—one that perhaps only one in a million might experience—could have crushed my spirit before it had a chance to flourish. My condition made me stand out, not in the way a person might hope to stand out in the world. It was a difference, a visual reminder that I didn't fit the mold society so often expects us to fit. But from an early age, I was taught not to bend under the weight of other people's expectations or their shallow judgments.

My mother was the anchor of my resilience. She was my rock, my teacher, and my guide, not just in the art of business, but in life. At just 16 years old, I began working alongside her, soaking up every lesson she had to offer. And it wasn't just about money or success; she taught me how to live with faith, to lead with compassion, and to carry myself with the dignity that no skin condition or societal standard could strip away. My mother always reminded me that we weren't made for the easy path, but for the one that takes strength, grit, and unwavering faith.

With her wisdom as my compass, I've faced the world head-on.

She taught me that when you set your mind on something, there's nothing—not skin, color, nor condition—that can stand in your way. If you're purple with horns or black, white, or speckled in between, none of it should stop you from claiming your place in the world. This belief became the foundation of who I am: a strong, independent woman, unwilling to be knocked down by what society deemed as differences.

My journey led me into the construction business—an unexpected path, perhaps, for someone like me. But as I learned early on, the roads less traveled often offer the most rewarding views. In this male-dominated field, I've built not only a successful company but a purpose. I mentor minority businesses, helping them navigate the same roads I once walked. Some have even grown to the point where they've become my competition. It's friendly competition, of course, but a proud testament to how God works through us.

God laid it on my heart to use my skills to uplift others. My life's mission has become more than just about building projects—it's about building people, showing them the compassion and mercy that has been granted to me. When I think about my achievements, they aren't measured by dollars or contracts alone. Instead, I count the lives I've touched, the businesses I've helped grow, and the faith that has carried me through.

And I've accomplished a lot. I've completed the big three—the trifecta, if you will, of mega construction projects in Wisconsin. The Zoo Interchange, the Mitchell Interchange, and the Marquette Interchange. Those were my mountains to climb, and I reached

the summit of every one. Setbacks didn't stop me; even during the downturn of COVID, when businesses like mine slowed, I saw the blessing in the pause. Fewer projects meant I could pour more of my energy into the people I was mentoring. God has a way of showing you what's important in the quiet moments when the noise of the world dies down.

But the pinnacle of my career was the Mitchell Interchange project. It wasn't just a major construction feat; it was the largest minority contract ever awarded to a woman in the state of Wisconsin. Fourteen million dollars. Nobody else has accomplished what I have in this field, and that's a legacy I'm proud to leave behind.

Through it all, my children have stood beside me, partners in my business, part of the legacy I'm building. Working with them every day is a reminder that we're not just constructing roads or bridges—we're building futures, theirs and mine. And as much as I've given them, they've given back to me tenfold.

In all that I do, I aim to be remembered not just for the contracts signed or the projects completed, but for my heart, for being fair and honest, for showing compassion when it was needed most. My trucks carry murals honoring our military because I believe that everything we do should serve God's kingdom. With great blessings come great responsibilities, and I don't take that lightly.

If I were to offer one piece of advice to those following in my footsteps, it would be this: always strike a fair deal. In construction, negotiations can often feel like a tug-of-war. But it doesn't have to be that way. You can create win-win situations where both sides walk

away feeling respected and valued. An honest day's work for an honest day's pay. That's what it means to live with integrity.

God continues to bless me, and with those blessings comes the chance to leave a lasting mark, not just on the landscape, but on the hearts and lives of the people around me. And when it's all said and done, that's the legacy I want to be remembered for.