



Doing it *afraid*

*Publisher, wife, mother
and fundraiser Jenny Jacob
44 shares her story about
life, abuse, disappointments,
doing it afraid and how
Finally At 40 Magazine
was born, this is her story...*

By Dorothy Edwards Thomas

My husband and I were visiting some new friends - people of Italian heritage, with a large welcoming family. As is usual in such a home, we enjoyed great hospitality and a splendid meal, and afterwards were sitting around the table chatting, when I noticed that there was a young woman sitting in the kitchen part of the family room, hiding, it seemed behind a large potted plant.

My husband also noticed her, and tried to strike up a conversation, but Jenny could not be persuaded to come out and join the rest of the family.

This was my first introduction to Jenny Jacob, young wife and mother - afraid of talking to people she didn't know really well, afraid of strangers and suspicious of men.

Jenny, the eldest of a family of six, had every reason to feel afraid of people. Around about the age of five or six years, she was sexually abused, but told no one about it. Approaching womanhood she came to the full realisation of what had actually happened to her as a child. Every time she remembered the experience, she felt extremely ashamed, particularly in her teens.

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Recalling that terrifying experience, Jenny says: “As a teenager, I felt extremely dirty and compelled to wash my hands. Later on it was difficult for me to relate to or have any sort of friendship with the opposite sex.”

Jenny became shy and full of fear, especially of people. She was afraid to speak out or to express an opinion. “I think I was the most fearful girl in all the world,” Jenny recalls. Remembering her childhood, fear became a major stumbling block in her life, she never ventured out and her life was lived enclosed within her family home.

At twenty-one, Jenny had what she describes as the “dream wedding with the beautiful white dress,” but sadly the marriage ended three years later. Jenny describes her heart as not only broken but black. She wondered if she would ever recover from the feelings of grief, pain and disappointment and it was only the joy that her daughter Rachael brought that helped her through this time.

Through her black despair, Jenny discovered the love of God - and began to climb out of the pit of darkness into the light of love and acceptance. Her embracing of the Christian faith changed her completely. Jenny discovered the power of forgiveness which enabled her to forgive her molester. (Jenny saw him by chance some time after that, and had no ill feeling toward him.) Jenny says, “I believe bitterness can hold you back and harm you emotionally, there is freedom in forgiveness.”

She also made the decision to move beyond her life of fear and low self-esteem. **“I wanted to change,”** said Jenny. “My church responsibilities gave me opportunity to address public gatherings even though my legs

were shaking so much that I could hardly stand, and my voice would quaver almost to a stop. I decided that none of these things would stop me from moving on. I decided to face my fears and do it afraid!”

Meeting Jenny you would never guess she was once a fearful young girl, as now she is able to express an opinion and speak out. Jenny says, “There have been times where I say what I think and I get myself into trouble, oops how do I get out of this - it's definitely a change.”

In 1992 Jenny became interested in helping women in third world countries to become financially independent, and, encouraged by her church pastor, she started a funding movement called “Luke Eight.” Through funding dinners, and with the generous contributions from business women in her church, Jenny was able to raise thousands of dollars for women in the South Pacific to help them start small businesses. She also visited them, held management seminars, provided information on hygiene and personal health issues, and encouraged them to look outward beyond their own needs. Now there are many Luke Eight organisations all through the South Pacific, India and Uganda, where women have overcome their own limiting circumstances and now reach out and help others in need.

Jenny resigned from the executive of Luke Eight in 2006, but still maintains an interest and attends Luke Eight funding dinners.

As a divorcee, Jenny was more or less contented with her single lot and for 17 years the word marriage was not even a part of her vocabulary. “But then,” Jenny said, “I met and married a wonderful man Jim Jacob from New Caledonia who was also interested in helping others, and has



Photo by Ikon Images
Jenny is dressed by Roxanne Fashion VIC
Makeup by Cathy G

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At 42, Jenny was looking for work and discovered being over forty was a definite disadvantage to being hired. Three separate employments only lasted a few months, and she became depressed and anxious. During her depression Jenny was prompted to research the over 40 syndrome (menopause) and discovered she was definitely not alone. One morning, as she was lying in bed (unemployed) feeling low and vulnerable a thought flashed through her mind. "I could start a magazine for women over 40!" It all seemed quite impossible, but the idea would not lie down. Jenny felt sure that there was a market for such a publication. She even had a name *Finally At 40 - Life Begins*.

Part of Jenny's vision was that this magazine would encourage women over 40 to believe in themselves, to move beyond feelings of low self-esteem, to believe that it is possible to see dreams come true, and to prove the old adage that *life begins at 40*. The second part of Jenny's vision, was to continue her interest in raising funds for women and orphans in the third world.

For the next three months she did all the research she could. During that time Jenny also applied for loans from various banks, but she was rejected until finally she was able to secure a small loan of \$3000 which she used to buy stationary and office equipment. "\$3000 was short lived, but I was very grateful to get that support." Jenny says. Along the way she met a handful of people who were involved in the magazine industry, and they became her mentors and helpers and saved her thousands of dollars. With a plan and strategy in place and only \$10 left in the account Jacob Publishing was born early July 2006 "Was I afraid when the business began, yes! Even though the feelings of anxiety and depression were present, I was determined to overcome them, I used to tell myself that tomorrow would be a better day."

Jenny went out to sell advertising space in her magazine day after day—, and it was nothing short of a miracle that she was successful given she did not even have anything to show her prospective clients! There was a period of four weeks where there was not one sale, but she continued knocking and eventually, slowly but surely the sales came through." On September 2006 the first copy of *Finally At 40 Life Begins* was published, and it continues to go from strength to strength.

Jenny says: "The office receives emails regularly thanking us for the magazine. Women share how encouraged they are by the stories of other women's successes and how they have overcome many obstacles to reach their desired goals. I feel truly blessed by their comments."

Jenny says, "If you have a dream or idea small or great and want it to become a reality, but you feel afraid, take a leap of faith into the unknown and do it afraid because I have learnt with every problem there is always a solution!"



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In 2007 Jacob Publishing won the New Business Award for Victoria.



Jacob Publishing is also now publishing a second magazine *French Provincial*, available from selected Newsagents.