

How We Jumped to a New Future

by Tania Gray

It's scary to step out on faith and make a break for a different life. It's especially unsettling when the whole family does it, basically at one time.

My husband and I both resigned our jobs without any employment waiting for us. We sold our house and property and moved to another state. What caused this seismic upheaval in our family of husband, wife, and two grown daughters?

That spring of 1997, we lost Jerry's sister to cancer. We were visiting her and her husband when she died. It was a terrible shock. It made us think, "Life is too short! If you are strangling from stress and disappointment, make a change." It was something Jerry and I needed to do, and our daughters felt the same.

Our elder daughter Sara was the first to leave. When everything was packed in her car, she and I stood in the kitchen with our arms wrapped tightly around each other, both bawling our heads off. Sara had her own reason for leaving. She was heading to Springfield for a new job and a fresh start, hoping to heal a broken heart.

Our younger daughter Charlotte was the next to go. She was off to join a friend in Grenada, which is known as "the Spice Island," one of the Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles. I sobbed while I watched her plane disappear in the sky. Charlotte had visited her friend in Grenada once before. This time it wasn't for just a visit; now there was a promise of a job and a new life in an exotic place.

After the last garage sale ended and the last garden hose tucked into the back of the moving van, I cried as I left my beautiful garden behind.

My husband and I moved to a small town in the Missouri Ozarks. We found temporary jobs while we lived in and refurbished my parents' former home, getting it ready to sell for my mother. Then we moved to Springfield, closer to her and other family members.

Grenada was a great experience for Charlotte, but it turned out to be less than her anticipated paradise. The promised job did not materialize, and living with her friend's family turned sour. In six weeks Charlotte was back in the States. Eventually she found the love of her life (and a job) in Massachusetts.

Sara realized that she needed to continue her education, so she got a teaching assistantship, earned her Master's degree in Technical Writing, moved to a good job in Wichita, and found a husband as well.

Leaving established careers was similar to jumping out of a plane and waiting for our parachutes to open. One of my wise friends said, "Don't forget to enjoy the view along the way."

The view was exciting alright, a thrill a minute, like a roller coaster ride. The ride was often bumpy. We experienced crises and challenges, but God met every need. When we needed a miracle, God provided.

We found a church and a house we love. I was able to be there for Mother in her last years. Jerry is still a university teacher. I taught a few more years and then retired to write and paint.

It's risky and frightening to make that jump. But I recommend doing it when you know in your heart it is the right thing to do, and you have the assurance that God is leading every step of the way. We have even started a new garden.