

**30 Lessons In Love, Leadership and Legacy
From Harriet Tubman**

Karol V. Brown

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To my husband James Brown, my Mother, Frances Moore,
My children Adia, Ariessunna, Atiara, and my grandchildren;
Aurmahn, Nathaniel, Moussa,(MJ) and Shanaelynn

Acknowledgments

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Preface

Through our company, Brown Tones Productions, I tell Harriet Tubman's story. My husband James sings Negro Spirituals as part of the presentation. Over the years, we have shared the life of Harriet Tubman at schools, on college campuses and in theaters.

Keeping with our motto: 'Brings You as Close to Meeting Harriet Tubman as You Will Ever Be', our unique performance is designed to help our audience feel like they're sitting in Ms. Tubman's Auburn, New York home. This happens as I transition into the role of the 92-year-old and converse with my visitors (the audience).

When asked why I do this Harriet Tubman program, I pause to ask myself the following questions. Why am I so obsessed with Harriet Tubman? What is the purpose of spending years researching her life and putting so much energy into developing this program and writing books about her? What do I want people to get from the stories? My answer is that it is because of my love for Harriet Tubman. I love who she was as a person.

My seventeen years of research on Ms. Tubman began around 1995. What I discovered made me feel like I discovered a gaping hole in American History. I felt that the American history books were short-changing Harriet Tubman, by not writing her entire life story.

When I embraced my discoveries, it allowed me to become Harriet Tubman on stage. Discovering that she hosted guests in her home and told her stories lit a spark inside of me. At that time, I was active in Toastmasters International public speaking club, and developing an interest in storytelling. It was a natural instinct for me to develop a story about Harriet Tubman for Toastmasters.

To tell just about Harriet Tubman's experience as a conductor on the Underground Railroad was too ordinary. I felt that, in order to give a full life story, I would start close to the end of her life and reflect back. I felt she would do this when guests visited her, and thus, I became the 92-year-old Aunt Harriet Tubman. I feel privileged and honored to shed a new light on her life as I tell her stories in the first person.

This book, *30 Lessons in Love, Leadership, and Legacy from Harriet Tubman*, was the natural next level for me. I have a new voice for telling Harriet Tubman's stories; her voice. My book provides a glimpse into my understanding of her and the lessons in leadership we can learn from her. This is done by relaying the information in the voice of my character, Aunt Harriet. I base the information on the books written by Sarah Bradford.

Sarah Bradford interviewed Harriet Tubman and wrote two books, *Scenes from the Life of Harriet Tubman*, published in 1868, and a second edition, *Harriet Tubman, The Moses of Her People*, published in 1886. These two books are the basis for every other book written about Harriet Tubman.

Books written about Harriet Tubman bear witness to her great deeds. *30 Lessons* will speak of the greatness of her character and leadership abilities.

Harriet Tubman developed her natural skills. Like her, we too have skills to be developed. *30 Lessons* focuses the natural characteristics that contributed to her great leadership. Within these pages, you will learn of the physical and mental obstacles she had to overcome, and of the determination she had in order to free not only her family, but others as well.

Although Harriet Tubman's stories are in a time and setting unfamiliar to us living in the 21st century, human nature has not changed. The lessons I have learned while traveling, "As Harriet Tubman" are valuable lessons of love, leadership, and legacy.

Harriet Tubman will be as close to mentoring this journey through her life in leadership, as you will ever come. These stories will demonstrate 30 lessons in love and leadership.

Each lesson topic includes quotes on leadership qualities from leaders from the past and present.

At the end of the stories are comments on the lessons learned and the leadership traits demonstrated in the stories. There are also discussion questions to start you thinking about how to apply these concepts to your own life.

I want Harriet Tubman's stories to remind us all that anyone can step up, stand for something, step out, and take the lead to make a difference.

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The last section in the book is on Legacy. Harriet Tubman left a legacy for all of us. Everyone can leave a legacy. As you go through these 30 lessons and consider your own life, think about what you can do and what you want people to remember about you.

I have also included a glossary of leadership traits and qualities. The terms I use as traits are familiar to some people; however, many of the words have several definitions. This glossary provides the definitions that are appropriate for the leadership qualities demonstrated in this book. After reading this book, my hope is that Harriet Tubman will be considered a model for how to make a personal contribution to the world.

Along the Eastern States of the United States, March 10 is "Harriet Tubman Day." As we approach the 100th year since her death on March 10, 1913, I hope to bring a new light to the legacy Harriet Tubman left us. I would like to see a National Harriet Tubman Day, celebrated all over the United States and around the world on March 10, 2013 and annually thereafter.

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PART ONE: LEARN FROM THE PAST



Harriet Tubman, age unknown

Lesson 1: Keep the Spirit of a Leader

“It isn't until you come to a spiritual understanding of who you are, not necessarily a religious feeling, but deep down, the spirit within that you can begin to take control.” Oprah Winfrey, (American, television host, actress, producer, and philanthropist, 1954-)

Family Ties

I was born about 1820 or 1821, I ain't sure, because there were no papers to tell my birth date. My Mama said it was in the spring of the year, about March. We lived on the Eastern Shores of Maryland in Dorchester County. My name when I was born was Araminta Ross. People called me Minty for short. My daddy's name was Benjamin Ross, we called him Daddy Ben. My mama's name was Harriet Green. It was when I was about twenty-four years old that I changed my name to Harriet, like my mama. There were nine of us children. I was in the middle. Daddy Ben worked for the Baltimore shipyard as a lumberman. He taught me all kinds of things about the woods, where to hide, which berries were good to eat and which ones were for medicines. Mama worked in the big house as a cook.

My master hired me out to work away from my parents when I was a young child, about five or six years old. I worked long hours and I had to grow up fast. When I was away from my family, the people I worked for yelled at me or whipped me for not doing my work right, or for just being me.

It was hard on me not to be heartbroken and sad all the time. My master was always sending me to work for some mean folks. When I didn't work out for them, they sent me back home. Then after I got to feeling all better with my family, the master would send me to work for some folks meaner than the others were.

Lesson 1: Keep the Spirit of a Leader

For the time I was home, I felt like somebody worth being treated kindly, I was loved. Sleeping on Mama's bed made me feel warm and safe. Mama didn't really have a bed- just a quilt on the floor to sleep on, but I was always as close to her on the floor to sleep as I could be. I loved my family and their love is what I held onto. In my heart, I always had Mama's praying and cooking, Daddy's singing and stories, and my sister and brothers laughing and playing with me. When I was away from my folks and alone on a cold hard floor, just thinking about them helped me feel better. All I could do to comfort myself was to think of my family, sing, and pray to Jesus. The only joy in my life was my family. I asked Jesus to keep me near my family, always. Well, he brought me through those hard times. Those mean people could not break my spirit.

Lesson Learned: Hold on to pleasant thoughts.

Appreciate the family time.

Keep your faith, and don't let anyone take your self-esteem.

Harriet Tubman's childhood was not one that would be encouraging to a child. She suffered from physical and mental abuse. However, she had something to hold on to when there was no one around to protect her.

When there is nothing else to hold on to, there is love of family and faith in God. People can't allow a hard life to break their spirits. This strong spirit is part of one's personality. With many people, the spirit is within them, but their time to develop it just has not yet come. Hold on to your spirit; your time is coming.

Keep the Spirit of a Leader

Discussion question:

1. When times are hard and your spirit is down, what do you have to hold on to?