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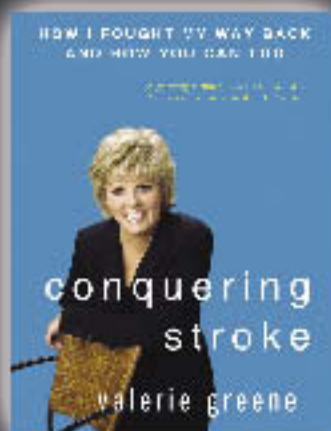
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*From Powerless...to EMPOWERING!
The Fight of my Life
-Valerie Greene*



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Cover Story

CONQUERING STROKE: Valerie Greene



Strokes kill two and a half times more women than breast cancer! What a staggering statistic! Although more men have strokes than women, 62 percent of stroke

deaths are women and they also have worse long-term outcomes if they survive. A significant number of stroke patients are among those in high-stress occupations such as executive officers, lawyers, and teachers. Yet stress



does not appear on any of the lists of risk factors for stroke. "One more thing, and I'm going to blow my top!" may not be far from the truth. Depression is another emotional risk factor for stroke. The good news from the National Stroke Association: up to 80 percent of all strokes can be prevented.

This is Part 1 of a two part feature on local stroke survivor, Valerie Greene. The author of *CONQUERING STROKE: How I Fought My Way Back and How You Can Too*, Valerie shares her fiery personal journey and a solid foundation of prescriptive advice on stroke symptoms, rehabilitation and management of a stroke from world-renowned physicians in this field. Valerie's inspirational story promises to be the wake up call America needs. Time lost is brain lost.

At 31 years-old, Valerie Greene was a healthy, vibrant businesswoman with no risk factors for stroke and yet in 1996, a massive stroke paralyzed the left side of her body and left her unable to speak. After being misdiagnosed with everything from migraines, to multiple sclerosis, to vertigo, to being drunk, it took six months and a second stroke for doctors to identify Valerie's shocking condition. A large blood clot completely occluded her brain stem artery and was just a hair away from taking her life. Doctors gave Valerie a grim prognosis---she might never walk and talk again, and most of her hearing would be permanently lost. Sheer

determination propelled her out of her wheelchair and on to a 90% recovery.

On September 16, 1995 after finishing reports before heading off to an evening networking event, Valerie was overcome with a severe headache. Nothing like she had experienced before and isolated on one side of her face, she turned off the lights in her office hoping that a power nap might help. The pain intensified and later that evening, experiencing dizziness and nausea, she was rushed to the hospital. She was ultimately diagnosed with migraines and prescribed medication. In May of 2006, feeling like she had a touch of the flu, again dizzy and nauseous, a doctor diagnosed her as having vertigo and wrote her a prescription. Unaware that "a blood clot would soon be heading for my brain, a silent killer on the loose, and my body was trying its level best to warn me. Ten days later, that clot reached my brain stem and nearly killed me. It's a miracle I survived."

Excerpts from CONQUERING STROKE: How I Fought My Way Back and How You Can Too
Like most patients in the aftermath of a massive stroke, I sank into an abyss. When three psychiatrists came into my room and tried to encour-



age me to accept my limitations, it felt like a death sentence. But instead of succumbing to it, something deep within me resisted. That moment ignited a spark that grew in strength dur-



ing the weeks that followed, firing up my determination to begin the fight of my life.

**MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1996,
9:30 P.M.**

What's happening to me? I can't focus, I can't keep my balance. "I-I-I-I nnnneeed hhhhelllllp." I didn't recognize my own voice. My left side was weak and heavy, my speech was slurred, and I was tumbling through space. What is wrong with me?

The view of my world had suddenly become a haze-distorted and nauseating. I felt as though I were stuck on Disney World's Mad Tea Party ride. My teacup would not stop spinning, this ride would not end.

The bright lights in the emergency room nearly blinded me as I lay in my curtained cubicle, trembling in fear. Across from my bed, a man -loud, obnoxious, and obviously drunk, was yelling obscenities. Would anyone hear my genuine cries for help?

"I-I-I-I neeeeeed helllp," I pleaded with the nurses. I was desperately trying to request that a nurse call a doctor who knew my history, but my words just ran together. Instead, I motioned for pen and paper and wrote my request, trying to steady my trembling hand.

"Call Dr. Powers," I wrote. Dr. Powers is a neurosurgeon and friend. He would know what to do. Fortunately, a nurse deciphered my plea and agreed to call him. Moments later she returned to tell me he was out of the country attending a medical conference.

My heart sank as my mind raced frantically. What's going to happen to me now?

I grasped the metal guardrails of my hospital bed as the dizziness increased and everything spun out of control. I began to vomit down the side of the bed. My words became dim and weak as I begged for help. Through blurred vision I could



Valerie Greene Con't...

see the nurses' station. Heads turned every so often, but no one seemed to notice me or hear my cries. Why doesn't anyone seem concerned?

I was cold and my body shook as my head lay pressed against the cold bars I clung to. Beads of moisture ran off my face, and the odor of vomit was appalling. My strength was waning as my warrior spirit rallied to fight. It felt like hours until an orderly noticed I had passed out lying in a pool of my own vomit. Rather than change the linens, he lifted my head and laid a towel over the soiled area and wiped my face.

Looking up at him, my eyes pleaded in the absence of words, then scribbled the word "stroke." He explained that he was only helping out in the ER but would deliver the note to a nurse. As he disappeared from sight, I passed out.

Now an internationally recognized spokesperson for the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association, Valerie shares her extraordinary journey in her new book

CONQUERING STROKE: How I Fought My Way Back and How You Can Too, and offers critical information that can literally make the difference between life and death or between recovery and chronic, profound disability. She is also a keynote speaker at many special events and conferences, and has appeared on several local and syndicated television news programs. "What was once seen as a death sentence not so long ago is now a treatable, preventable disease," Valerie states. "I have written this book to provide you with the information you need about these resources, and many more on the horizon, and to provide you with what is most important: Hope. A revolution in healthcare is taking place as we become aware of ways to treat and prevent illnesses more effectively."

"The fire within drove me to persevere for my own recovery and continues to motivate me today as I reach out to other stroke victims and caregivers." As Valerie carries on her mission of stroke awareness, she is filled with compassion as she stands unassisted, and looks

stroke survivors squarely in the eye, speaking her message into their heart: "I know where you're at. I was the head of a company, too. I was in a wheelchair just like you, drooling, face drooping, unable to speak, filled with anguish and despair. But look at me now!"

In Part 2 of this feature, we will explain the "revolution in healthcare" that aided in the healing of Valerie Greene. From the use of a hyperbaric oxygen chamber to stem cells from a lamb, the cutting edge inroads of technology and medicine are unfathomable.

An internationally recognized spokesperson and survivor of a severe stroke, she has received accolades from such shows as Larry King Live also celebrities and dignitaries including Dr. Oz, Michael J. Fox, Kirk Douglas, the CEO of the American Heart Association, and the Lieutenant Governor of Florida. Additionally, she was instrumental in helping pass the Florida Stroke Act signed into law on June 17, 2004. www.valeriegreene.com

Valerie Greene

A Stroke Survivor Making a Difference

AUTHOR & INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER



Orlando Woman Newspaper presents

An Exclusive Central Florida Speaking Engagement

Wednesday, May 28, 2008, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

at Timacuan Golf & Country Club in Lake Mary, \$35.00/ Limited Seating

A Luncheon will be served and every guest will receive a Complimentary copy of Valerie Greene's new inspirational book. Guests are invited to meet the author and have their book autographed. Valerie Greene, author of *The Fire Within: A Triumph over Tragedy*, and the newly released *Conquering Stroke: How I fought My Way back and How You Can Too* is our featured Guest Speaker. Come hear Valerie's inspirational journey and how she found the courage and fire within her to save her own life. After hearing how she overcame a multitude of obstacles, you will walk away knowing that "Nothing is Impossible."

RSVP to Event@orlandowomannews.com or call 321.214.4255

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