

DR. JOAN KING

Joan King was a pioneer in the emerging field of neuroscience, her work particularly notable because of being a woman. After devoting decades to research in her field, she retired from academia and created a consultant firm through which she offered life coaching, using scientific principles, personal philosophy and spiritual principles to assist both men and women through life transitions.

EARLY LIFE

Joan King was born March 6, 1938, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her parents owned local grocery stores, and family life revolved around the kitchen. Throughout her life Joan shared her talent for creating New Orleans cuisine with others. After her father's death, when she was 10, she began a quest for the deeper meaning of life. At 17 she entered a Dominican convent, emerging 11 years later after having studied philosophy and theology along with chemistry and physics. She then spent some time with the governmental organization Vista, living among and working with disadvantaged communities in Appalachia.

FURTHER EDUCATION

In 1972 Joan earned a doctorate from Tulane University in neuroanatomy and psychology, a degree unique at the time.

CAREER

Joan spent 25 years, most of that time as a professor at Tufts University Schools of Medicine, engaging in research in neuroscience. This work involved her in the medical, dental and veterinary schools at the university. She chaired the Department of Anatomy and Cellular Biology, during which period she developed the Tufts University Center of Research in Reproduction. An award-winning lecturer, she was highly regarded by students, who were moved by her passion and intellectual hunger. She retired and became professor emerita in 1997.

THE REST OF THE STORY

Joan relocated to Fort Collins, Colorado, after retirement. She established a life coaching consulting firm, Beyond Success LLC, to aid others in the processes of self-examination, self-reflection and self-actualization. She wrote several books that articulated her philosophy. The books, she said, were a way to share her insights about what our bodies can teach us about thriving in life and relationships.

Married to Dr. Stuart A. Tobet, director of biomedical engineering at Colorado State University (CSU), she died in 2014 from breast cancer.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Joan was certified by the International Coach Federation as a master coach and coach trainer.

She was named a Colorado Woman of Influence in 2011. The organization recognized her for inspiring life and works. She was influential in establishing the organization's annual gala that honors outstanding Colorado women.

The Joan King-Tobet Memorial Scholarship at CSU is awarded annually to a female student who has an interest in science and engineering.

BOOKS

The Code of Authentic Living: Cellular Wisdom
Cellular Wisdom for Women, An Inner Workbook
A Life on Purpose, Wisdom at Work
A Jolt of Joan, an inspirational journal

HER LEGACY

Joan said, "Who are you to deprive the world of your greatness?" With such thought-provoking statements as this she inspired women and girls to reach deeply into their inner selves to find the strength and wisdom that would guide them through life. She was courageous in facing cancer and throughout her life lived by the biological, spiritual and psychological principles she had explored and adopted.

QUESTIONS

1. How can our bodies teach us about thriving in our lives?
2. What do you understand "cellular wisdom" to be?
3. Do you think a life coach would be helpful for you?
4. Joan incorporated scientific principles into everything she spoke of and shared with others. How important is science in understanding ourselves?

GLOSSARY

Articulate--express with words

Cellular—the basic structure of life, a composite of living cells

Cuisine—food, usually referring to gourmet food

Gourmet—highly specialized, creative recipes

Neuroanatomy—the science of relationship between the nervous system and the body

Neuroscience—any or all of the sciences, such as neurochemistry and experimental psychology, which deal with the structure or function of the nervous system and brain.

Philosophy—a particular system of thought

Psychology—the study of human behavior

Self-actualization—achieving the best that a person is capable of

TIMELINE

March, 1938—born in New Orleans, Louisiana

1955—entered the Dominican convent

1966—left the convent

1972—awarded a Ph D from Tulane University

1972-1997—professor at Tufts University

1997—retirement

2011—named Colorado Woman of Influence

2014—death

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