

## WHAT WERE YOU BORN TO DO?

By, Tom Krause

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Jerry was born to fly. From the time he was little, when his mother pushed him from the nest, Jerry loved to soar through the air. Up and down, high and low, Jerry spends his days gliding gracefully in the sky.

One day Jerry met Steve. Steve was different from Jerry. Steve loved to climb trees. Steve had spent his whole life climbing up and down every tree he could find. It could even be said the Steve may well have been the best tree climber ever.

Even though they were different Jerry and Steve became friends. Jerry would soar around the tree cheering on Steve as he climbed as fast as he could to the top. When Steve arrived at the top of the tree Jerry would land next to him on a nearby limb to visit. Climbing and soaring was their favorite game which they played for hours at a time.

Then came the time when they were both old enough to go to school. One day they were both given an assessment to see how they would measure against the rest of the students. Jerry and Steve were taken a very tall tree which stood in front of the school. They were told the test was to climb to the top of the tree as fast as they could.

When the test began Steve climbed to the top of the tree with ease. Jerry on the other hand flew to the top of the tree meeting Steve at the top. Afterwards Steve was told he had passed and would be accepted along with the other students. Jerry was told he failed because he did not complete the test properly.

"But I made it to the top of the tree just like Steve." Jerry said.

"Yes, but you did not climb. You flew." said the instructor.

"But I can't climb." said Jerry.

"I know." said the instructor. "Until you can climb like the rest of the students you will not pass."

Jerry was sad. He did not think it was fair to be judged like that. After a while he started to resent Jerry and the rest of the students because they could climb and he could not. It wasn't long before Jerry stopped trying to learn to climb. The worst part was he also stopped loving to fly. After all, if flying was never going to be good enough then why do it?

One day Jerry met a wise old owl.

"Why do you look so gloomy?" The owl said.

"Because I can't climb like my friend Steve and the rest of the squirrels." Jerry replied.

"Why would you want to climb?" The wise owl said. "You are not a squirrel. You are a bird."

They told me flying was not good enough. They said if I want to pass like the rest of the students I need to learn to climb." Jerry replied.

"Ridiculous." Said the Owl. "Never let others tell you your gift is not good enough. You were born to fly."

With that the wise owl flew high in the sky spreading his majestic wings as he soared away.

Jerry thought about what the wise owl said for a long time. The more he thought the better he felt.

"He is right!" Jerry said. "I was born to fly. I love to fly. I love my friend Steve. What is wrong with that?"

Time passed. As Jerry was flying through the sky one day he noticed smoke coming from the woods below. As he swooped down to take a closer look he noticed his old friend, Steve stranded on the limbs of a burning tree.

Quickly Jerry flew down to help his friend. Grabbing Steve by the back of the neck with his claws, Jerry carried Steve to safety in a nearby field. Steve thanked Jerry and vowed they would always remain friends despite their differences.

Steve went back to the tree where the instructor was testing other students. He approached the instructor and said loud enough so Jerry could hear above, "Never measure someone by what they **cannot** do. Everyone should be measured by what they were born to do. It is that which makes us DIFFERENT and that will make a DIFFERENCE in the world someday. Jerry smiled.

With that the two friends spent the rest of their days together doing what they were born to do - climbing and flying as friends.

Tom Krause – 2013

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**Tom Krause, an American Poet, has been a contributing author to the nationally acclaimed CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL book series 16 times. Tom's humorous and heartwarming presentations, based on the themes BE YOURSELF, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF and GO FOR YOUR DREAMS, have been enjoyed by thousands of people worldwide. Tom is the author of TOUCHING HEARTS-TEACHING GREATNESS, Stories from a Coach that Touch Your Heart & Inspire Your Soul, and THE LITTLE BOY'S SMILE. His book for teenagers, A TEEN'S GUIDE TO NOT BEING PERFECT, received an Independent Publisher's Award for 2010. Tom recently retired after 31 years of teaching/coaching in the Missouri Public School System.**