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- Wellness
- Work-Life Balance
- Resiliency

**Personal Development
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SURVIVE AND THRIVE

From the Firehouse to the Playhouse

By Barbara Rubel

I am on a mission to survive and thrive. As I brace the wind and the cold, my quick step edges me closer to Broadway. I keep reminding myself that I will be warm once inside the theatre. Although it is only mid-November, the weather is surprisingly frigid. Picture this, only a block away from the theater, a frosty breeze pushes the cozy jacket hood off of my head at the exact moment I am walking past a firehouse. I see the names of brave firefighters who were killed on September 11th etched onto a mural and then I get to thinking. How often do people walk by this bright red wall of names without pausing? Is it possible to simply walk by without recalling what happened that fateful day in New York City?

As I look at the Battalion 9 mural, I reflect on what happened back in 2001 and get in touch with the negative emotions I am feeling. Like a trigger, this moment in time, as I stare at the wall of remembrance, I am brought back to a traumatic moment in time. It is practically impossible to predict how you will react when you look at a tribute to those that have died attempting to save the lives of others. Too many brave men and women lost their lives that day and it changed the way many of us look at the world in which we live.

I will never forget what happened on September 11th and I am grateful to be reminded on this blistery day. Although this is true, I am having a strong negative emotion as I slowly read the names on the firehouse mural. It is painful for me to reflect on all of the lives that were lost. I deeply concentrate on September 11th, a moment in time forever etched in my heart. When it happened, I was teaching a masters level class, Crisis Intervention, at Brooklyn College. Although my students and I realized that we were living through the worst crisis ever imagined, we also learned what it meant to come together as a courageous country that will survive and thrive.

Let's face it! Most of us want to walk by monuments, tombstones, and commemorative plaques as quickly as possible, as they often bring us back to a time of great sorrow. Although some may think it morbid, I feel that these tributes help us to remember, to grieve together, and make meaning in what happened. I touch the wall of this infamous firehouse and think about the families and friends of those that have perished. I slowly say a silent prayer for each and every one of them. Then, I take a photograph and notice that the mural reads, "Pride of New York, Never Missed a Performance." I smile and brace the cold wind, turn towards the playhouse, and walk with purpose and energy to a Broadway performance in a city that will survive and thrive.

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