

As the World Cracked

By Cecilia Arosemena

I remember the moment my world cracked. I was standing by the big trash cans at the YWCA's incubator commercial kitchen on March 11 2020, throwing out the last trash bag of the catering work day, when I heard the shocking and urgent public health announcement, demanding that all food and beverage businesses close that night.... until further notice .

I thought that my business plan was bulletproof, my trajectory solid... but then, just like that.. life happened, and it changed all my plans to its plan. The pandemic shut my front door, my little family run, 10 year- old juice business, Dish for Dosha, we were growing fast, and thriving out of the YWCA grounds on Calle Bonita. I guess you could say, the pandemic caught us at the top of our game... And still, we had to close.

I was so sad, so angry! Feeling disoriented, grief stricken, recently abruptly unemployed, and a thin line away from losing our 2 bedroom rental , due to the next crisis of rising rents. I feared I would easily find myself as one of the many unhoused mothers on the streets of Tucson, discarded, wrongly judged, and utterly wiped out by their own life circumstances. YET...

After the epic fall, came the epic climb, and that's when I was able to rise and reinvent myself, once again. The onset of the pandemic reminded me of the housing crash crisis in 2008. That little wave wiped out my mother's real estate business, and led to the inevitable foreclosure of our family home.... And then, out of the pain came a breakthrough moment for me, that came out directly from those times of the housing crisis.

So, as grace would have it, one merciful night, at my darkest hour, between the soggy tissues, financial statements and my very own pity party, I saw a compelling vision of my useful future, playing in front of me like a movie... a life without catering or juices, but instead families, homes, keys... LOTS of keys.

And in that soggy instant, I decided to go back to school, get licensed and get back to work. It turns out that the human spirit is incredibly resilient, when it's driven by a purpose. Beating hearts can endure almost anything, even what seems doomed and impossible, if we have the courage to keep re-discovering ourselves, and keep growing. In hindsight, the harshness of the covid pandemic actually cracked me wide open when my little business broke... and the freedom from its demands, allowed me to recreate my life, and reframed the way I could serve people, in a bigger capacity.

Real Estate offered me a nice change of pace, it allowed the time to re-evaluate what I was passionate about and believed in. I believe that home ownership is the key to security, stability and intergenerational wealth building.

And I intend to spend the rest of my days making sure people get keys to their own homes, so help me god. I am inspired when I see families dream big, and create spaces where they can build their lives, and create a valuable legacy to leave behind for their families, for wealth, security, stability... crisis or not.