

INTERVIEW WITH DEVONSHAE PERSON

Dara Girard

Authors meet each other in different ways: at conferences, workshops, retreats, through group blogs or as fans. I happened to be introduced to DeVonshae Person because of a fluke. She was in her local Target and saw that the cover of my book *Taming Mariella* was identical to her book title *It All Falls Down!* She contacted me, a correspondence began and I invited her to be a guest author on my blog.

DeVonshae's story is one of inspiration. Not only do I hope you will find this interview fascinating, I also hope you will put your excuses aside and follow your dreams as this brave author is doing.



1. When did you know you wanted to be a writer?

Since I was a little girl I had the gift to write. I've kept a journal since elementary school and often was told by teachers that I had a wonderful imagination and great speaking voice. They urged me to pursue fields where both of these talents could blossom. However, it wasn't until I had a near death experience by way of a severe Lupus crisis that I woke up and said, "Hey, you need to live your talent and stop wasting time!"

2. Did you go through self-publishing or traditional publishing? Why or why not?

I met someone at my local library just by happenstance; he referred me to *Essence Magazine's* best selling author, Brenda Hampton. She owns a local publishing company called Voices Books and Publishing. I submitted my manuscript and the rest is history as they say.

3. What marketing efforts have you found to be successful in promoting your books?

My biggest marketing effort has been simple word of mouth. I have had several local book signings and I send out numerous email advertisements about my books. Currently, I have two published novels and I also freelance write for *STLVoces Magazine*.

4. What non-fiction book(s) helped you the most as a writer?

When I was ill, I read [Soul of a Butterfly](#) which is the triumphant story of Muhammad Ali. In that book (written by his daughter), he talks about how his greatest fight has not

been in the boxing rink but in dealing with illness. It was very inspiring to me and taught me the strength of the human spirit.

5. What's next for you?

What's next for me? Well, I am currently doing a project called *Wolf Wrestlers 2008*. I am interviewing people with Lupus in St. Louis MO and collecting their stories for a book. I want to help them tell their stories and educate the public on how the disease affects their lives.



6. What advice would you like to share with aspiring authors?

I would like to encourage writers to tenaciously pursue their dreams. When obstacles come your way, simply find a way around them. Never give up! Time is too short.

7. Where can readers reach you?

I can be reached at dpersonbooks (at) yahoo.com. My books can be purchased at www.bn.com. Just type in my name and both of my novels will appear. [note this is a direct link]. Also readers can visit my MySpace page:

www.myspace.com/dpersonbooks

Find out more about lupus at the [Lupus Foundation of America](http://www.lupusfoundation.org).