

Extraordinary Women

Gloria Gaynor

*“I’ve got all my life to live and I’ve got all my love to give...
And I’ll survive, I will survive.”*

When Gloria Gaynor recorded the Grammy Award winning song “I Will Survive” over 30 years ago, it immediately struck a chord, especially in women, who found the lyrics a comfort as they coped with romantic disappointments. Even now, “I Will Survive” seems to appear when most needed, providing a boost of hope, confidence, and courage to all those suffering through love lost and troubled relationships.

But the song was actually recorded following a harrowing medical ordeal. Six months earlier, Gloria had fallen from a stage and injured her spine. By the next morning, she was paralyzed from the waist down and had to be rushed to the hospital. She was there for three and a half months, emerging in a back brace following spinal surgery. Her road to recovery continued for another three months until she could finally record “I Will Survive” standing in that back brace.

The lyrics may describe recovery from a failed relationship, but perhaps the power of Gloria’s performance, and the impact of that song, can be explained at least partially by her personal recovery from both emotional and physical hardship. At the time, Gloria was also grieving the loss of her mother, her best friend, who had recently passed away. Even as she faced these traumatic events, Gloria, who had been crowned the Queen of Disco, overheard record executives say “the Queen is dead.” But the Queen did not die; Gloria was determined to survive, and her hit tune became an anthem not only for her fans, but for herself.

“My purpose in recording that song was to bring hope and encouragement to people...to impact their lives in a way that helped them to know...they could gather their strength and overcome their problems,” Gloria has said.

To this day she remains a survivor who has faced many challenges, and says her life has been a testament to this driving philosophy. While she has enjoyed phenomenal success for decades, she has also seen leaner times, as all artists have. She has spoken too, of the excess-

es she encountered during the disco era. She says she was able to resist these, ultimately, through her faith, which increased her inner strength exponentially. Gloria credits her spiritual foundation, built from childhood on, with her ability to meet challenges with confidence.

Gloria has continued to cope with physical challenges. Although she loves performing, her schedule is quite taxing, since she travels internationally on a regular basis. Dancing has been an integral part of her shows, but her ability to dance was compromised by two car accidents, which affected her knees.

One knee was injured so severely, she later required knee replacement surgery. The other has been problematic since 1984, when Gloria was diagnosed with knee osteoarthritis at the age of 41. Climbing steps to the stage, sitting with her family and even standing were all painful. She gained weight, since exercising became too difficult.

She tried several treatment options to manage the pain including physical therapy and simple pain relievers. Recently, Gloria’s pain was significantly improved by a treatment called EUFLEXXA® (1% sodium hyaluronate), which mimics the natural cushioning fluid found in normal knees. Since she began to feel a reduction in her osteoarthritis knee pain, Gloria has been able to exercise much more—working with weights, using an elliptical machine, even dancing again—and has lost 55 pounds. “Performing has always been my greatest passion,” she says. “Now I can do more activities on stage with less pain, which feels great.”

Gloria believes the term “I will survive” is little more than a catch phrase unless it’s backed up with concrete inspiration. As a result, she likes to provide fans with supportive advice based on her life experiences, and she shares these words of encouragement on her website, www.gloriagaynor.com. Gloria’s support for her fans is also expressed through her work with several charities. Recently, she’s taken on a new role as national spokes-



person for EUFLEXXA®, through which she hopes to raise awareness of osteoarthritis knee pain and its treatment options (for more information, visit www.gloriasknee.com).

As Gloria tells fans on her website, “You are not responsible for when you were born, but you are responsible for whom you become.” Gloria has been awarded many honors for her work, including Grammy Awards and induction into the Dance Music Hall of Fame in 2005. She has survived not only in music, but in all areas of life, and is a true inspiration.

EUFLEXXA® (1% sodium hyaluronate) is used to relieve knee pain due to osteoarthritis. It is used in people who do not get enough relief from simple pain medications such as acetaminophen or from exercise and physical therapy.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION- You should not receive this product if you have had any previous allergic reaction to EUFLEXXA® or hyaluronan products. You should not have an injection into the knee if you have a knee joint infection or if you have skin disease or infection around the injection site.

EUFLEXXA® is only for injection into the knee performed by a qualified doctor. After you receive this injection you may need to avoid activities such as jogging, tennis, heavy lifting, or standing on your feet for a long time (more than one hour). The safety and effectiveness of repeat treatment cycles of EUFLEXXA® have not been established. The safety and effectiveness of EUFLEXXA® have not been shown in people under 18 years of age.

Side effects sometimes seen when EUFLEXXA® is injected into the knee joint were pain, swelling, skin irritation, and tenderness and these were generally mild and did not last long. Please see full prescribing information.