



Wisconsin Singers Alumni Spotlight on Nicole J. Phillips



Nicole J. Phillips has been many things: Miss Wisconsin, a broadcast journalist, a speaker, and a mother. But before all that, she was a Wisconsin Singer. After years as a news anchor, she became an advocate for kindness and positivity. Faced with overwhelming negativity in her life, she committed to highlighting positivity in her community. Thanks to Nicole, inspiring and heartwarming stories reach people through her blog, podcast, newspaper columns, and speaking gigs. She says that she is inspired to help people learn to face adversity with positivity, just as she has in her own battle against breast cancer.

From an early age, Nicole knew she would join the Wisconsin Singers. During high school, she would attend Singers performances whenever the troupe was nearby her home in Reedsburg. After years of idolizing the Singers, she became one herself. As a first-year Singer, she had to juggle the responsibilities of performing and of her new role as Miss Wisconsin. Despite her best efforts to devote herself to both roles, she ultimately had to leave the Singers. Though her time in Singers was short, it was host to her “strongest, most vivid, most fun memories” from college. The friendships that she formed in the troupe were stronger than most, and she is still great friends with several Singers. Her experiences in the Singers were a small but impactful part of her degree in Broadcast Journalism.

While journalism was important to her, Nicole found that the news often focuses on the worst parts of human nature. In part due to the negativity that she faced as a journalist, she felt “angry, negative, and bitter” and was struggling to take care of herself. For the good of her husband, her children, and herself, she knew she had to make a change.

One day, inspiration struck her. After helping a young mom in a charitable act of kindness, Nicole experienced what she calls a “helper’s high”—if you know the feeling, you will understand the phrase. She realized that kindness could be the key to escaping negativity. Within a year of being “really intentional about kindness,” Nicole had found her key to a better life.

Since then, she has dedicated her life to spreading the word about the philosophy that had turned her life around. She started writing a newspaper column called “Kindness is Contagious” highlighting acts of kindness throughout her community. Also, Nicole has developed an online presence through her weekly blog and podcast, and she is starting a TV show this spring with the same title as her column. She really has made a career out of kindness!

Nicole also speaks to groups, focusing on teaching people to embrace positivity. She says to “[t]hink about what you’re thinking about.” If you find that you’re focusing on the negative (or “hurry, worry, jury” in her mnemonic), she advises that you “have a mantra at the ready to replace those negative thoughts” because “our brain learns to react tomorrow based on how we react today.” The best thing that you can do for yourself is to “commit to thinking positive, happy, life-giving thoughts.”