I had a mentor all my life telling me what to do, and I learned a lot. But then I lost my mentor and I was forced to grow up. It seemed to be the worst of times but in hindsight, it was the perfect time to grow. It was my time to learn from the Greatest Mentor and the circumstances targeted one goal: to find and love myself. It took a loss, a kind of death, for rebirth to emerge.

First was the overwhelming shock of freedom that unexpectedly came. I thought I was going to drown in the sea of freedom. For decades I felt safe in my cocoon, then suddenly the thread was unraveling and my safe cocoon was crumbling before my very eyes. I was faced with unthinkable questions. Where was my mentor? Why is this happening? Where am I going? How do I proceed? I felt abandoned, betrayed, furious, humiliated, and full of contempt.

But life went on. I had to emerge slowly from my brokenness. I needed to think for myself and make decisions. My life made a three-hundred-sixty-degree turn from selfless devotion to my family to self-survival. It was a frightening time. I was desperate to have a mentor since I was used to having one and it became a habit to depend on others for everything. I cannot imagine it now but back then, my every thought was about others and directed by others. Then all of a sudden, I was by myself. The journey appeared treacherous and frightening.

It was my faith that God had a plan for me that sustained me. I saw Him there for me in the events that occurred. He was there for me every step of the way. He was the Greatest Mentor. He spoke to me through the books I read, the people I met and the events that occurred. Some events were life changing and others as simple as finding the right book. Always the message was: “I am here. Do not be afraid.”

He left nothing to chance. There was a master plan and all I had to do was to believe, to listen and to be open so that the caterpillar
could take the steps to emerge as triumphant as the butterfly. I was the reluctant student for independence since I was in my comfort zone as a codependent for four decades. I was the caterpillar wrapped up in the safety of my cocoon believing that I was being the best I could be for my family. But the butterfly had to emerge in spite of herself. The circumstances tore open the blanket of safety, one thread at a time.

After a lot of loving mentoring, after a lot of tears and pain, after accepting that I could only change myself and no one else, the silk threads from the cocoon unraveled to give birth to a beautiful creation, a reinvented self. The butterfly emerged in resplendent colors of confidence, surrender, forgiveness, faith, openness, non-judgment and love.

I had searched for the Greatest Mentor everywhere. I encountered him first through Sr. Rivkha. She told me how strong I was, which was a shocking thought. I was the last one to realize my own strength since I had given my power away for so long. That was the first step to reclaiming my own power, to know that I had my strength within me. It also occurred to me that I was born alone and I will die alone. Accepting this fact actually took out the fear of a life spent alone.

Wayne Dyer’s tape “101 WAYS to Transform your Life” was another major influence in my metamorphosis just by changing the thoughts I had and the words I spoke. That took away the bag of victimhood and a little light peeped through. One of Dyer’s ways said that “the tyrants in your life are your greatest teachers” so I started to see my persecutors as the angels I needed to bring about my transformation. Another said, “Whatever happened is God’s plan.” This led me to accept, not blame and the light in the road became even brighter.

Regina Dee of Inner Peace Foundation and the support group from there are now my chosen family. The deep friendships and support of this chosen family is priceless. Sr. Grace of Maryridge was another mentor. I stayed alone in their Refuge House, which was 200 steps away from the nearest soul but I was not afraid. I threw rocks and screamed my anger into the pond. I screamed and cursed until I could not scream anymore.

The Landmark Forum and Reparenting the Child Within (RCW) with Sr. Harriet were weekend seminars that reawakened the real me. My daughters, whom I mentored, are now my mentors. One listened and listened and listened and that was all that mattered. The other
was fearless, inspiring and was a role model for me then. My son’s unwavering faith in the justice of God was empowering.

My best friends were always there for me, some of whom are counselors, who up to this day mentor me in my everyday dreams and frustrations. I felt the love of God from all the mentors He surrounded me with. Everyday is a present from Him and I believe that today is the day when a thousand miracles begin in my life.

Carpe Diem! Seize the Day! Candy Perez de Tagle enjoys each day as a present that needs to be opened excitedly. She loves being independent, conquering her challenges. She can only imagine the enormity of God’s love, in her life, which this year, brought her to live in Europe.