

“It’s never too



Beloved for her beautiful voice and radiant smile, Louise Mandrell shot to country-music stardom as part of the hit trio the Mandrell Sisters. But at the height of her success, the wife and mother was suddenly hit by a dark season of hardship and heartache. Here, how family, faith and believing in herself restored her shine

By Deborah Evans Price

There was a time in the 1980s where you couldn’t tune into to a radio station without hearing the rich crooning of country superstars Louise Mandrell and her sisters, Barbara and Irlene. “Working with my sisters gave my career a big jump,” says Louise, who, after starring on the variety show, *Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters*, released a slew of solo hits that catapulted her to fame. But after moving her family to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, to open a theater, life took a scary and heartbreaking turn.

“I was devastated when my daughter, Nicole, became addicted to drugs in her early 20s,” Louise tells *Woman’s World*. “She overdosed and fell into a coma, and doctors warned me that my only child might not pull through.” Thankfully, Nicole survived, and Louise did everything she could to help

her—and today, the 35-year-old is 12 years sober and thriving.

But a couple of years after Nicole’s overdose, another crushing blow fell on the family. Louise’s husband, John, was diagnosed with Morgellons disease, a rare and painful condition. To give John the best care and to be closer to Nicole, they sadly sold the theater and moved back to Nashville. “Life can change in an instant with illness,” Louise says. “But there is joy and pride in being a caregiver, in helping a loved one.”

Another surprise blessing: Louise’s sweet 6-year-old granddaughter, Larkin. “She knows I sing, so she asked when I was going to do a concert,” Louise says. “It hit me: I had get back on stage!” Today, the 65-year-old has done just that, starring in a play and releasing a new album. Here, her tips for living joyfully and starting anew.

Do YOU remember when?



Louise (left) starred on *Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters* from 1980–82



Don’t miss Louise’s new album!

After a three-decade hiatus, Louise has returned to the recording studio to celebrate the classic songs that led her into music. Showcasing beloved country songs like “Crazy Arms” and “Tennessee Waltz,” her new album—on sale now!—is a blissful trip down memory lane. “I’m so happy to be back doing what I love,” Louise beams. “I grew up with these songs, and it’s a thrill to share them with my fans!”

late to start again!”



1 Recharge with a carefree escape

“When I’m really feeling blue, there’s nothing like a little TV and a warm mug of goodness to pick me up,” Louise admits. “I’ll sit down and watch something that makes me laugh, and it makes all the difference. I know it’s not necessarily in style—all my girlfriends say, ‘Pick up a good book!’—but when I’m feeling down and I put on a comedy, I’ll start laughing, and suddenly, I’m back to me! I really love *Frasier* for that. It makes me smile and forget my troubles so I can get up and get ready to go again!”



4 Ask for help

“If you need help, especially if you are caring for others, don’t be afraid to ask,” says Louise, who’s a caretaker for her husband, John. “I always tell caregivers to be proud that you are a giver, but I also say that when you find someone willing to lend a helping hand, let them! They’ll find joy in doing something good, and you can use that moment to do something for *you*. That’s important. It’ll help restore your spirit and bring you peace to keep going!”

Learn by listening

“So many people have influenced my life for the better simply because I kept an open mind and *listened* to them,” Louise says. “It’s amazing what you learn when you cut through all the fog and simply try to be a good listener. They say that the best businessmen in the world are the ones that walk into a meeting and listen first, then speak, and that’s absolutely true. At my age, I continue learning new things every day this way, and it brings so much joy!”



2 Find a loving and encouraging tribe

“While I’m really good at encouraging others, I’m really *not* good at encouraging myself,” Louise confesses. “But my best friend, Kelly, is an encourager: She makes me believe in me when I stop. As women, we should all be that for one another. We should all open up to people who remind us of all the talent and good that’s in us—it’s the surest way to find strength to do all that we’ve been put here to do!”



Louise’s best friend, Kelly (right), is a source of strength



3 Louise is inspired by her mom, Mary Ellen (second from right), every day

Remember your true beauty

“My mom gives the most tremendous advice,” Louise shares. “When she would see me looking in the mirror when I was young, she’d say, ‘You look beautiful—but it’s more important to be beautiful on the inside.’ That’s something I’ve carried with me throughout my life. And as the great-grandmother to my granddaughter, Larkin, my mom reminds me to feed her that truth—and to keep it close to my heart too.”



6 Love all of you

“It’s so important to be happy in the skin you’re in,” Louise says. “I’ve struggled with my weight since I was young, but I try not to be unhappy in my body. I had to go on a diet to get in shape for a role recently, but it wasn’t because I was unhappy in myself. If you have a health reason to lose weight or are unhappy, lose it. But do it with all the love in your heart and be happy with who you are.”