



At the White House in 1985.



Meeting my idol David Cassidy for the first time in the greenroom at ABC studios.

room was equivalent to special ed, whereas being able to hang out in his dressing room was the acceptance I always longed for.

As I stood behind the curtain waiting for my name to be announced, panic began to set in. Robert walked over to me on the dark stage and asked if I was okay. I told him I had never opened for anyone before. "If I bomb, I'll ruin your show!"

He laughed and said, "No Geri, you can only ruin your show, not mine . . . and besides, they are going to love you. You must believe right now that you already have them in the palm of your hands." He cupped his hands to give me the visualization, and then started laughing again, waving his hands in a jerking motion. "Okay, maybe you have the audience more like this . . . but nevertheless, you still have them!" When the curtain opened, Robert beamed, waving his arms jerkily from the wings. The beauty of that story illustrated how comfortable he was around me, no phoniness or bullshit. I appreciated his kindness more than he ever knew.

I finally met my idol, David Cassidy, in 1985. My friend Keith found out that he was going to be on *Good Morning L.A.* He called the producer and said that I was a huge fan of his and asked if I could possibly come watch the show and meet David. No problem. My name was left at the gate and we were told to come straight to the greenroom to meet David beforehand. It was another dream come true, but as usual, I was an anxious mess over it. I changed my clothes at least six times that morning, and when we got to the gate at ABC studios, I told Keith I didn't want to go through with it. If Keith had not fought me, I probably would have chickened out. But Keith knew how long I had wanted to meet David, and he refused to allow me to sabotage my opportunity.

We arrived before David, so it gave me a little time to relax. Whatever composure I was able to conjure up in the 15 minutes of waiting for him went out the window when he walked in the room. Keith leaned over and whispered for me to introduce myself to him, but before I could even think of what to say, David extended his hand to me and said he loved my comedy. I was floored that he knew who I was! I thanked him and said that I loved his work as well. Then he asked me if I wanted to get makeup first. I told him thank you, but he could go first, as he was at the top of the show. He thanked me and left the room.

Keith was furious with me. "Why did you let him believe that you were doing the show too? You're not doing it, and he's obviously going to figure it out!"

"Okay, then let's just leave now. I met him, c'mon, let's go."

"Geri, why are you acting like this? You've wanted to meet him since 1971!"

"He'll think I'm a groupie!"

"You have to *be* a groupie for him to *think* you're a groupie! When he comes back, I want you to tell him the truth!"

When David returned, he thanked me for allowing him to go first, but before he could continue, I interrupted him. "David, I lied . . . I mean, I may *need* makeup, but I'm not doing the show this morning. My friend Keith found out that you were going to be here today and arranged for me to be here to meet you."

David smiled sweetly, and said it was okay.

"No, you don't understand . . . I have been in love with you since 1971! When I was in high school I didn't have a boyfriend or go on dates or anything, I was so lonely. But I had this crush on you, and sometimes that gave me a reason not to give up." By this point, tears were trickling down my cheeks. He grabbed both of my hands and held them in his own. He told me to calm down, that he wasn't Jesus Christ. At this point I was feeling so embarrassed that I had emotionally melted in front of him.

Still holding my hands, David said, "Geri, I have beaten my head against the wall time and again wondering why I ever did *The Partridge Family* in the first place, and then I meet people like you. You remind me of the good things that came out of it. If I was able to give you hope and joy, then I am grateful for that. Thank you for being honest with me. You are so sweet, don't lose that quality." He kissed me on the cheek and was rushed onto the stage by a production assistant. Unbeknownst to both of us, a part of that little talk went over the airways before David went onstage. He was pre-miked, and somehow while the host, Christina Delorean, was talking about David, her mike turned off, and David's mike was on. I never did find out if it was done intentionally, or by accident, or through some sort of cosmic interference, but I do have a copy of the show on a VHS tape, and David and my voices are heard very clearly while Delorean moves her lips.

Even though I was just barely scraping by in 1985 and 1986, they were years of one amazing connection after another. But I felt like Moses, allowed to see the Promised Land, but not allowed to enter it. Celebrities, wealth, and privilege were all around me, yet all those perks were just beyond my grasp. Because my insecurities gripped me, I had a difficult time believing that I was intelligent enough, talented enough, or socially skilled enough to