



When she landed the role of Brooke on *One Tree Hill*, she was suddenly thrust into the real world with a group of peers, and has grown up with them over the course of the show's eight seasons.

"We've all experienced our biggest ups and downs [on the show]," said Bush. "Everyone says your 20s are the most formative time in your life, and I would certainly say that is true for myself and everyone that I've had the pleasure to work with."

As Bush grew up, so did her character on the series. Brooke Davis started out as a popular and promiscuous cheerleader who spent her time partying and drinking. But as time passed, she matured into a caring and responsible woman who even fostered a child. "Our creators and I sort of made a deal that Brooke would start out in her behavior as a good example of what *not* to do, but her heart would be a great example of a really good person, and her heart has changed her behavior over the course of the series," she said. "I'm very proud of the way we dealt with a young girl becoming a woman, someone socially responsible and ethical."

Bush's foray into directing was fascinating for her and another good fit for her do-it-all attitude. "I'm a bit OCD and sort of all over the place with the way that my creative process works," she said. "It's interesting to be able to block scenes and choose props with every character, to design the composition of the show, and the way the opening shots and scenes work. It's really fulfilling."

She said she looks forward to being able to direct again, but as the future of the show remains uncertain, so is Bush's. "I don't really want to plan. I just want to immerse myself in the choices that are coming," she said.

But one thing she'll continue to do is to fight, especially for equal human rights and a cleaner environment. "I've never tolerated people being treated with ignorance or bigotry," said Bush. "Equality and nurturing should be the way that we need to live and sadly, a lot of people don't want us to do that, but we're afraid of realizing that we should fight back."

**"We're all so much more powerful than we think we are. We can do amazing things for people."**

A particular moment that motivated Bush to become an advocate for cleaning up the disaster caused by the BP oil spill was when she looked through photographs with her friend Christian, a fisherman in Grand Isle, Louisiana. "Looking at pictures of his kids on his boat and catching their first fish, and knowing they weren't going to be able to do that for many, many years to come in the Gulf—safely, anyway—was an incredibly heartbreakingly poignant moment for me," she said.

Bush and her boyfriend (and *One Tree Hill* costar), Austin Nichols, visited the Gulf with Global Green, and returned with harrowing images of the severity of the damage done.

"I'm seeing people attempt to tear away what protections we have for our environment for their own financial gain, and I'm so disgusted by it," Bush said. "It's been very eye-opening for me to

have jumped into mainstream social media. The response and the reward have been so much greater than I expected it to be because I've got this group of people standing up

with me who inspire change, and what an amazing, incredible thing that is."

Bush encourages people to get involved and donate what they can to help clean up the Gulf. She's asked fans to donate to her CrowdRise page instead of sending fan letters or gifts to her.

In describing what 2010 has been like for her, Bush said, "I've learned an awful lot about what people are made of and what I'm made of and so much goodness there is left in the world, even though you're not sure that it's there."

And come to think of it, she *does* have a plan for 2011.

"Yeah man, I want to save the world!" she said. "Not by myself, but I want to keep making good changes in my life, keep helping other people make good changes in their lives, and be inspired by people who are doing those things to continue to live the way we can. We're all so much more powerful than we think we are. One small change can be a catalyst and set off a reaction, and we can do amazing things for people."