

## **Your Year To Revive and Come Alive**

A compilation of 365 inspirational quotes and applications--one for every day of the year.

### **Introduction**

"You are today where your thoughts have brought you, you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you." —  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Statistics show that every single week most everyone hears over 2,000 negative comments, not to mention all the negative self-chatter we tune into. This book is my gift to you—a small effort to combat all that negativity with positive, up-lifting, soul-feeding, motivational, action-taking views to fill your mind with good thoughts.

It has long been my desire to write a devotional book that you could have handy to read each day as it is so important to start your day with good positive uplifting thoughts. So I decided to compile the best of my blog posts into just such a book. The themes of my blogs are: Self-worth, what you think is important, war against negative self-chatter, gratitude, giving, adversity is good for us and builds character, forgiveness, taking quiet time, kindness and relationships. You will find these recurring themes in this book presented in different ways. You may find them repetitive and think I am harping on the same thing. Well, I am. These principles are the gate way to a happy successful meaningful life.

The compiled quotes, illustrations and exercises have come from different, people, books and articles I have read over the years. I have tried to give credit to who credit is due but some things I read many years ago before the idea of sharing them with the world ever entered my mind. I apologies if I have not given someone due credit but one thing each entry has in common is that they are all tried and proven by me.

I sometimes give you exercises or ask you a question to help you make some positive change but mostly I want to help you to stop and think about your life and come up with your own ways you can make changes for the better. I understand that can sometimes be difficult and you may need the help of a coach to help you discover some of the deep truths in your life.

I hope that the inspirational material that I have sent out over the years and now compiled in this book will be a blessing and help to you and your friends. Please remember that if you would like to read more quotes and stories like the ones found in this book you can find them on my [blog at http://actionvisioncoaching.weebly.com/blog](http://actionvisioncoaching.weebly.com/blog)

Wishing you all the best as you stay positive, love others, and give generously.

Coach Dana

"May today there be peace within. May you trust that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others. May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content with yourself just the way you are. Let this knowledge settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us." — Mother Teresa

## Resolutions



### Quote of the day:

“The average person means well, but they set their goals too high. They [try] it two or three times and say, ‘This is too tough.’ And they quit.” — Jack LaLanne

### Think about it:

Making resolutions at the start of a new year is an ancient and well-established tradition. Apparently, the early Babylonians’ most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment. The month of January, (when the New Year is celebrated in most parts of the world), is named after the Roman god Janus. Janus had two faces, enabling him to look back on the past year and forward to the next. He was the god of beginnings.

We make resolutions, but often do not seem well equipped enough to keep them. One reason we have a difficult time changing old bad habits and forming new ones is that sometimes our expectations are too extreme. Instead of making some gradual permanent lifestyle changes, we want instant success.

We’re conditioned to want quick results, whereas in reality, it often takes work over an extended period of time to achieve anything worthwhile. Carlo DiClemente, chairman of the psychology department at the University of Maryland, suggests setting realistic goals and making daily progress to achieve them. Armed with the right goals, the desire, and the persistence, you can form a new good habit this year. You can become the master—rather than the victim—of circumstances.

## Word of the Year



### Quote of the day:

“The Old Year has gone. The New Year has taken possession of the clock of time. All hail to the possibilities of the coming twelve months!” — Edward Payson Powell

### Think about it:

Like many people, I start thinking about my goals and resolutions for the next year. Most years I draw up a list of things I feel would be worthwhile goals to reach and beneficial improvements to make. However, I often don't reach the goals I set for myself and life gets back to “normal” after the holidays. But this year a friend shared a new concept with me that I thought was great, instead of making New Year's resolutions, she now has a *Word of the Year*.

“My *Word of the Year* is something that helps me realign and refocus throughout the year when I am feeling off track,” she explained. “It's now something that I live by.”

I asked her how she came up with her *Word of the Year*, and she explained that besides reflecting on what she would like to happen during the New Year, she would also think about the thought or word that tends to stop her from reaching her goals.

“Then I think of its opposite,” she said, “and that's my new *Word (or phrase) of the Year*.”

“You can also look through magazines, social media, and your environment to help you find the perfect inspirational word,” she added.

Why not try it for yourself.

## Take Action



### Quote of the day:

“It is important to realize that action is the key to making positive changes. Without action, knowledge is lost.” — Norman Vincent Peale.

### Think about it:

How true, especially for the new year when you are evaluating your goals, plans and desires. I have found no matter how good an article I read, a book, a study course or program I enroll in, whatever it may be, unless I actually take action and start applying the various points learned, then it doesn't do me any good. The “knowledge is lost” to me.

Just like Henry David Thoreau says, “A truly good book teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down, and commence living on its hint. What I began by reading, I must finish by acting.” The next time you read or hear something that rings true in your heart write it down and start acting on it. See what happens. You may find it is better to put small bits of knowledge to use rather than accumulating vast amounts of knowledge and never using any of it.

Don't be surprised if you start to really make progress and see positive change.



## I Love It



### Quote of the day:

"I am still determined to be cheerful and happy, in whatever situation I may be; for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances." — Martha Washington

### Think about it:

A 92-year-old woman named Maurine Jones seems to have discovered one of the secrets to happiness. Here's her story:

*After Maurine's husband of 70 years passed away, she moved into a nursing home. After waiting patiently in the nursing home lobby for hours, Maurine was shown to her room. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, she was provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet curtains that had been hung on her window.*

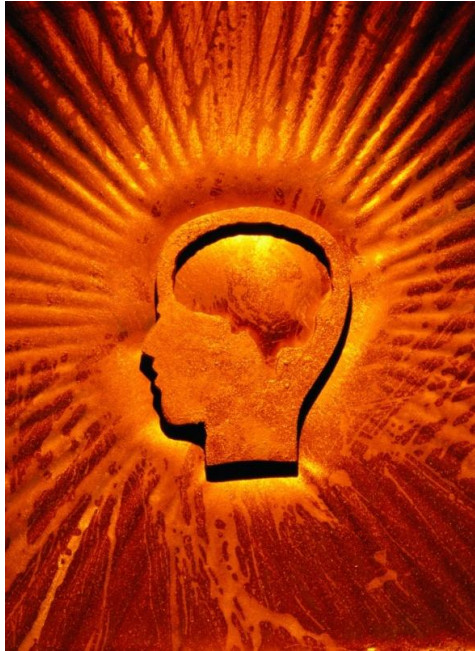
*Without hesitation she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy, "I love it."*

*The attendant replied, "Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room yet."*

*"That doesn't have anything to do with it!" she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged--it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it."*

Attitude is everything, and as Maurine demonstrates, our attitudes don't have to be dictated by circumstances. We each have a choice. May your daily choices bring you great happiness and fulfillment this year. May you say with Maurine "I love it" before you even see what the year brings forth.

## 30 Days to Gain New Habits



### Quote of the day:

“If you always put limit on everything you do, physical or anything else. It will spread into your work and into your life. There are no limits.” — Bruce Lee

### Think about it:

Limiting beliefs are negative viewpoints about yourself and the world that surrounds you. They are beliefs about what you can and cannot do, about what you can and cannot be, about what you can and cannot have in your life. These limiting beliefs or “thought habits” can sabotage your efforts to achieve happiness.

Negative self-chatter are the things that you tell yourself to explain the reasons why you can't achieve whatever it is that you desire. These are thoughts that berate, belittle, accuse, cause guilt or shame or basically all negative thoughts.

The good news is that there are no limits. All the beliefs we possess have been learned, we were not born with them and therefore, they can be changed. It is simply a matter of listening more to your positive thoughts rather than to the negative thoughts. Try it! If you will make a concentrated effort to reject negative thoughts when they come into your mind, and instead tune in more to the positive, you'll find it only takes about 30 days to replace the negative with new correct thought habits that will serve you well.

## Fatten Your Purse



### Quote of the day:

“The more treasure you give ... the more treasure will return to you. But few people perceive this simple truth. Most try to keep as much as they can for themselves and give little away. That’s why their purses refuse to fatten.” — Toyotomi Hideyoshi

### Think about it:

I couldn’t agree with Mr. Hideyoshi more, and his words illustrate my number one financial tip. Time and time again when I have found myself in a financial bind, the first thing I did was to look at how much I was giving. It has never failed that when I have given, even when I lacked and it was to my own hurt, I received it back again, and often with interest. It is a law of the Universe that the more you give the more you receive. The Universe never seems to fail to compensate.

Like Corrine U. Wells says, “You do not have to be rich to be generous. If he has the spirit of true generosity, a pauper can give like a prince.” Here is a practical way to apply this quote; something you can use right away in your quest to become more giving.

Be generous toward those with less and not envious of those with more. We tend to look at others who may be wealthier than ourselves and think, “I sure wish I had what he has.” That kind of thinking breeds envy and jealousy rather than contentment. To break this cycle, I would suggest being generous to those who are less fortunate than yourself and this will remind you of how good you really have it.

So if you would like to “fatten your purse” this year like Mr. Hideyoshi says, then why not try giving more and see what happens.

## De-cluttering



### Quote of the day:

“Nature abhors a vacuum.” — Aristotle

### Think about it:

I have found that quote to be very true and over the years by creating vacuums or spaces in my life for new things to come that it has been very rewarding and exciting. If you are wanting new and exciting things to come into your life this new year it might be a good time to do some de-cluttering in all areas of your life. Nature abhors a vacuum is not just a saying but is one of the laws of physics. I have found that the same law can be applied to our lives.

Somehow all that extra stuff sort of clogs up the energy. So when I am feeling frustrated that something is not coming into my life that I want I have found that one of the best and most effective ways is to de-clutter. For example if I want some new clothes I clean out my closet and get rid of everything I don't wear or no longer fits. The same can be true in any other area of your life. Like if you want a new relationship you may need to let go of an old one. Clearing out your files may lead to new clients, opportunities or ideas.

De-cluttering your to-do list may give you more time and leaving some blank space in your schedule gives the universe the opportunity to bring new exciting things into your life whether it be new business deals, a new relationship or a new creation. There is something about getting rid of stuff that attracts all sorts of good new things into your life. Create the space or vacuum and the universe will quickly send new things to fill the empty space.

What things can you throw out that you no longer need or that no longer applies to your life? Do a little de-cluttering and see what comes into your life. Remember if you are throwing out things that there maybe someone less fortunate that you could give it to and thus get a double whammy and receive the benefits of de-clutter and giving.

## More on Word of the Year



### Quote of the day:

“Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man.” — Benjamin Franklin

### Think about it:

If you are still trying to find your *word of the year*, it's not too late to still come up with one. (See Day 02.) Here is the process I used.

I reflected on all I hoped for, all I would like to see happen in the New Year, and the changes I would like to make personally and circumstantially. I also thought about the personal growth I would like to experience and the things I longed to see manifested in my life. Then I thought about one word I could hang on to, to help me stick to my resolve.

I chose the word “resilience” as my word of the year.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with making resolutions and listing goals. I did that too, but this year my word is helping me to stick to them as I've already been thrown off my path as I've already had two bouts of sickness which has hindered progress with my goals. My *word of the year* is what has helped me to get up and start again and not give up on my resolutions.

If you decide to try it, I encourage you to post your word throughout your home or work area to help remind you of what you want to focus on this coming year. Try sharing your word with your friends and co-workers. They may be inspired to choose one as well.



## Grow Brave By Reflection



### Quote of the day:

“The real man smiles in trouble, gathers strength from distress, and grows brave by reflection.” — Thomas Paine

### Think about it:

How true! It is very important to take time to reflect and think, but not to worry or fret. The kind of reflection that I'm talking about is taking time to feed the inner you. Just as your body needs to be fed, your spirit needs food too, and the best food for your soul is positive, uplifting, motivating, praiseful words. I have found that taking time out each morning to read positive material, reflect and/or journal has helped my life tremendously.

Try setting aside at least 20 minutes each day for inspirational reading, reflecting, and writing. For some, it may be difficult to reserve this time; if this is the case with you, try starting with only five minutes reading the Motivational Minutes and thinking about the quote and commentary. If you have more time, write a little about your own conclusions, as this will help you to put your thoughts into action. If you aren't able to fit this in daily, then try for three days each week and build up from there. Whatever you decide, it will be easier to follow through if you establish a definite time slot in your day and make this quiet reflection time part of your routine.



## Affirmations



### Quote of the day:

“Through the act of affirmative prayer the limitless resources of the Spirit are at my command. The power of the Infinite is at my disposal.” — Ernest Shurtleff Holmes

### Think about it:

Most of us battle negative thinking at some point in our lives. We put ourselves down for real or imagined faults and weaknesses, or we compare ourselves negatively to others. The use of positive statements, called affirmations, that you can repeat to yourself is a proven technique for overcoming negativity. The key is believing that what you are affirming is possible, because once you believe that a certain thing is possible, it is. It takes practice to focus on the positive, but in time you will see results.

The use of positive statements that you can repeat to yourself is a proven technique for overcoming negativity. Our thoughts shape our attitude, our attitude shapes our actions, and our actions help to shape our future. A changed life begins with a change in thinking. You set that process in motion by filling your mind with positive thoughts. The key is believing that what you are affirming is possible, because once you believe that a certain thing is possible, it is. It takes practice to focus on the positive, but in time you will see results in a happier, more secure life. Many people use Bible verses for affirmations. I often use the quotes that I send out, or you can make customized ones for yourself.

Here are four sample affirmations to get you started:

*Things may not be working out the way I had hoped--at least not yet—but I'm going to keep positive until they do.  
Today I'm going to think more about others and less about myself, and I'm going to make someone else's day better.  
I am not going to give up! I refuse to call it quits!  
I may not have as much materially as some people, but I have things that matter more—integrity and peace of mind.*

We are all different and have different needs, so choose the ones that seem to apply the most to you, or come up with some of your own.

Shakti Gawain says, “An affirmation is a strong, positive statement that something is already so.” As we learn to apply positive affirmations to ourselves and everyday situations, we begin to see ourselves and life in a more positive light allowing more positive things to come into our lives. Start using affirmations today and see what changes come about in your life.

## Examine Your Life



### Quote of the day:

“The life which is not examined is not worth living.” — Plato

### Think about it:

I understand that examining one’s life can be difficult at times, but the personal growth and benefits derived from this practice is well worth the effort. Start a journal by writing down your daily experiences along with the lessons you have learned will make you wiser and more capable to deal with the next set of lessons, and it may possibly help you make fewer mistakes the next time around. This habit can also help you develop self-awareness that will help you clarify your values and priorities, as well as keep you more focused on the things that truly matter.

Another benefit is that it can actually help you heal from past wounds, limiting beliefs and general confusion. It gives you the opportunity to vent or simply ‘mind dump’ making space for new, positive, creative thoughts. This examining, can provide you with a central place where you can record your insights on important issues, note key success strategies that have worked for you, and commit to all the things you know are important to achieve for a high-quality professional, personal, and spiritual life.

I thoroughly enjoy journaling and find it has been a tremendous help to me. When I'm feeling upset or any other negative or unsettling emotion, journaling almost always helps. It gives me space to pour out what I really think, and often seeing my thoughts in black and white gives me a sense of perspective and helps me work through things. It helps me to become more aware of my thoughts and feelings and helps me stay accountable to my values, boundaries and goals. It is a place to record the lessons, failures and accomplishments as well as to see my progress. And it is an excellent place to write the wild ideas, dreams, imaginings, schemes, and inspirations! And the weird thing is sometimes those things come true. It is also a place to record my gratitude list which is always a boost. I also have a symbol system so if I want to return to an idea, gratitude or lesson, I can, without wading through the muck that got me there.

Stop and think, if you currently keep a journal, or have kept one in the past, what benefits has journaling brought you? If you've never kept a journal why not start now and experience your own benefits.

## Habits Dictate Your Life



"We first make our habits, and then our habits make us."

### Quote of the day:

"Habits are safer than rules; you don't have to watch them. And you don't have to keep them, either. They keep you."  
— Frank Crane

### Think about it:

Whether you develop good or bad habits, either way, they will dictate your life. Therefore, it stands to reason the best thing would be to develop good habits for maximum assurance that your life will turn out best.

Why not decide on what habits you want to develop and thus come up with a "plan" for the way you carry out your days, and in turn, the rest of your life.

Then as Norman Vincent Peale says, "Repetition of the same thought or physical action develops into a habit which, repeated frequently enough, becomes an automatic reflex." In other words, you are what you repeatedly do. Take a look at what you do, and you'll see what you are becoming. For example, you become a generous person by giving repeatedly. If there are areas you would like to change in here's how:

Decide on the desired good habit you would like to acquire, and describe what that behavior looks like. Act out your description for a minimum of 30 days, by then that action should be automatic. Repeat this process for as many new habits that you would like to establish.

## Mission Statement

# Mission Statement

### Quote of the day:

“Vision without action is a daydream - Action without vision is a nightmare.” — Japanese Proverb

### Think about it:

I recently wrote a mission statement for myself. I'm sorry to say it was late coming in life as this concept had never occurred to me before, but better late than never. I reflected on my values and what things I wanted to stay true to. I included things like always thinking positively, living with integrity, kindness at every opportunity, being generous among others.

Often people justify improper behavior by complaining that society's values have changed. The fact is, basic values have not changed. People still know the difference between good and bad. It simply takes courage to live your life according to good principles in the face of whatever challenges arise. You can live up to your moral values if you question yourself before you do something. Ask yourself, "Is this right?" Regardless of background, nationality, religion or other differences, people universally recognize good moral values, such as honesty, fairness and respect. Once you know yourself and your principles are set, you can communicate them to others, act on your values and live according to your convictions as well as take responsibility for your decisions. This is where a personal mission statement comes in handy.

Whatever your values are, try putting the things you want to live up to down on paper. For me, creating my personal mission statement has been a tool to keep me true to my values. It is something I can refer back to whenever I am feeling confused on what direction to take next in my life.

P.S. I just read a great book on writing a Mission Statement called *The Path* by Laurie Beth Jones. It has a Christian flavor but has excellent tips on how to write your mission statement.

## Fear Defeated



### Quote of the day:

“Do the thing you fear to do and keep on doing it... that is the quickest and surest way ever yet discovered to conquer fear.” — Dale Carnegie

### Think about it:

I read that during World War II the Navy made sure that all of its new recruits either knew how to swim or learned how. The idea being, of course, that the ability to swim might someday save the sailor's life at sea. Non-swimming recruits were put into swimming classes. The greatest challenge to this program was the fear some of these young men experienced. One of the exercises required the new sailor to jump—not dive—from a board 6 feet in the air into 8 or more feet of water while a half-dozen expert swimmers stood by. The fear those young men displayed was *real*. Yet all that stood between them and the defeat of that fear was one drop into the water below. To overcome this fear they were “accidentally” pushed off the board, the result: Fear defeated.

This story illustrates the point: Action cures fear. Indecision, postponement, on the other hand, foments fear.

When we face tough problems, they stay mired in our mind until we take action. Put the action principle to work. Next time you experience fear, big or little, steady yourself. Then search for an answer to this question: What kind of action can I take to conquer this fear? Isolate your fear. Then take appropriate action as Susan Jeffers says just, “Feel the fear and do it anyway.”

## Bring Out the Best In Others



### Quote of the day:

“I love you not only for what you are, but for what I am when I am with you. I love you not only for what you have made of yourself, but for what you are making of me. I love you for the part of me that you bring out.” — Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### Think about it:

When I read this quote it made me stop to ask, do others feel this way about me? How wonderful to leave such a legacy and to be known for bringing out the best in others.

Whether we realize it or not, our life will make an impression on a lot of people before we die.

This impression may be positive or negative. Therefore, it is up to you to decide the kind of difference you want to make in the lives of those you touch. Will you be a positive or a negative influence? Will you build up or tear down? Will you be loving and encouraging or critical and condemning? Will you be a burden or a blessing to others?

If you too would like to have people speak of you like Elizabeth’s quote, take some time to think of some ways that you can encourage, support and instill confidence in others and start putting them into practice today. If you want to be a force for good, think about the people in your life and write down the name of one person with whom you want to make a positive difference. Then create a plan of action regarding how you are going to make that difference and get started today!



## The Glad Game



### Quote of the day:

“Our attitude toward life determines life’s attitude towards us.” — John N. Mitchell

### Think about it:

Perhaps you have seen the old movie or read the book, *Pollyanna*, written by Eleanor Porter. It is the story of a little girl whose parents died, and thus she went to live with her only relative—her rather stiff and staunch aunt. Pollyanna was an optimist who found a bright side to everything by playing what she called the "Glad Game," a technique she had learned from her father of trying to find something good in every situation, no matter how bad the circumstances. Through her cheerfulness and positive attitude, Pollyanna not only changes her Aunt but the whole town. This story so impressed me from the very first time I viewed the movie, that I have endeavored to play the Glad Game ever since.

To some the “Glad Game” is considered an escape from reality, but I have found that trying to look for the good in every seeming difficult situation has great power to transform not only your life but those around you, like it did Pollyanna. Try it and see what it does for you.

## Start a Ripple Effect



### Quote of the day:

"Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends forth a tiny ripple of hope." — Robert F. Kennedy

### Think about it:

Ted Kennedy used the following passage in the eulogy he gave at Robert's, his brother, funeral. It is taken from an address Robert gave to the youth of South Africa in 1966. I thought it well worth reprinting as it reflects my sentiments as well.

*"Some believe there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills. Yet many of the world's great movements of thought and action have flowed from the work of a single person. These people moved the world, and so can we all. Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each person can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."*

Let us take heed to Mr. Kennedy's words and start our own tiny ripple effect of hope by standing up for our ideals, improving the lot of others, and striking out against injustice.

## Be Specific



### Quote of the day:

"In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily trivia until ultimately we become enslaved by it." — Robert Heinlein

### Think about it:

When thinking about the goals you want to set this year remember setting goals is more than having a vague idea of what you want to achieve in the next few months. Instead, you have to be very specific. For example, saying, "I want to be wealthy in six months" isn't going to cut it. You need to say, "In six months I will earn \$100,000," or whatever the case may be.

Whatever your goal is: to lose weight, to have a better relationship, to start a new career, to earn more money, to reduce the stress in your life, to be more spiritual you need to be specific. Being definite will help your mind focus on precise ways to achieve your goals.

Take time to fine-tune your list of goals. Be specific and detailed with each one, make it tangible, set specific times and measurable success for reaching each goal.

## It Made a Difference to This One



### Quote of the day:

"If you can't feed a hundred people, feed just one." — Mother Teresa

### Think about it:

That quote reminds me of one of my favorite stories.

*A boy who was walking on a beach which was covered with starfish as the starfish had washed up in the tide, In an effort to save the fish, the boy started throwing them back in the ocean one by one.*

*Someone passed by and said to the boy, "You'll never be able to save them all, your efforts can't make a difference."*

*The boy looked up and wisely replied, "I may not be able to save them all, but to this one, it made a difference."*

There are so many needy situations in the world today, so much so, it seems overwhelming at times. You may ask yourself, "The needs are so great. How can I make a difference against such odds?" Well, even if you make a difference in one person's life, you've made a big difference. Reach out to help someone today.

## Life Goes On



### Quote of the day:

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on." — Robert Frost

### Think about it:

Sometimes we go through difficult times that try our souls, but in spite of everything, and no matter the difficulty, life goes on. Not only does life go on, but most often renewal or new beginnings come from difficulty!

Nature is a sample of this. Even in the most arid places you can find life being born, such as a tiny plant sprouting forth from the parched ground. We have the same ability to keep moving forward, even when all around us looks like defeat, to grow and find strength and hope again!

Like Orson Wells says, "A happy ending depends on where you stop your story." The following quote from an unknown author goes right along with those words from Orson Welles: "Everything will be okay in the end, and if it's not okay, it's not the end yet." If you find yourself stuck in a bad situation—don't give up hope as the end hasn't happened yet!

Even if you are going through a difficult time in your life and you can't see the way out, even if nothing else seems to work and nothing else helps, have faith and remember that life will go on, that you have it in you to be happy and smile again, to feel truly hopeful and to come out better by the experience!

Are there things in your life that you have given up on before the "end of the story"? Think about what you can do to change your situation and then go find your happy ending.



## Don't Destroy the Bridge



### Quote of the day:

“He who cannot forgive others destroys the bridge over which he himself must pass.” — George Herbert

### Think about it:

Forgiveness. Often this one word is painful to hear and difficult to imagine.

It's possible you have no desire to give someone the gift of your forgiveness, perhaps you feel that they are undeserving, or you are not motivated to forgive because you have been denied that gift yourself. If this is the case with you, remember, forgiveness is mercy, not justice. Forgiveness is never deserved, but when you give it to another, even when everything inside of you is screaming that you shouldn't forgive. Forgiveness is choosing to leave things in God's hands, and to accept that all people do wrong—including you.

Forgiveness is so important to our personal growth and has stunted people's progress. No matter how hard it is, do yourself a favor and stop and think about it. Is there anyone you need to forgive? If so work toward doing so.



## The Caterpillar and the Butterfly



### Quote of the day:

“What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the Master calls a butterfly.” — Richard Bach

### Think about it:

When confronted by a seemingly insurmountable challenge, my thoughts often turn to the example of the caterpillar and the butterfly. The caterpillar faces a tremendous struggle to emerge from the cocoon, but it must make this effort in order to survive. It is the same with life. If we avoid the struggles, we may be doing ourselves more harm than good. We may never give birth to our true self.

If the butterfly is helped out of the cocoon, it will not acquire enough strength to fly. Perhaps we, too, need a struggle in order to spread our wings and be transformed.

The next time life presents you with something that requires a great effort on your part, embrace the challenge and stand back and watch a beautiful butterfly emerge.

## Consider the Walnut



### Quote of the day:

"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!" — Anne Frank

### Think about it:

*Consider the walnut! If you compare a walnut with some of the beautiful and exciting things that grow on our planet, it does not seem to be a marvelous act of creation. It is common looking, rough, not particularly attractive, and certainly not monetarily valuable. Besides, it is small. Its growth is limited by the hard shell that surrounds it, the shell from which it never escapes on its own.*

*However, this is the wrong way to judge a walnut. Break a walnut open and look inside. See how it has grown to fill every nook and cranny available to it. It had no say in the size or shape of that shell, but, given those limitations, it achieved its full potential of growth.*

Just like the walnut, be sure you are judging yourself the right way. How fortunate we will be if, like the walnut, we blossom and bloom in every space of life that is given to us.

Take heart! If one nut can do it, so can you.

## Don't Wait To Give a Complement

BE KIND  
— for —  
EVERYONE  
YOU MEET *is*  
FIGHTING  
a HARD BATTLE

### Quote of the day:

"You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

I came across this story that illustrates these wise words from Ralph Waldo Emerson.

*A charming old gentleman used to occasionally stop by at an antique shop in New Hampshire to sell furniture. One day after he left, the antique dealer's wife said that she wished she had told him how much she enjoyed his visits.*

*The husband said, "Next time let's tell him so."*

*The following summer a young woman came in and introduced herself as the daughter of the old gentleman. Her father, she said, had died.*

*Then the wife told her about the conversation she and her husband had had after the old gentleman's last visit.*

*The young woman's eyes filled with tears. "Oh, how much good that would have done my father!" she cried. "He was a man who needed to be reassured that he was liked."*

*"Since that day," the shopkeeper said later, "whenever I think something particularly nice about people, I tell them. I might never get another chance."*

Are you putting off showing some kindness or giving a complement? Don't delay—do it today.

## Reveal the Greatness In Others



### Quote of the day:

“The greatest good you can do for another is not just your riches, but reveal to them their own.” — Disraeli

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of the Stevie Morris story.

*Stevie was blind, yet one day his teacher asked him to find a mouse in the classroom. Her appreciation for the fact that nature had given Stevie something no one else in the room had, a remarkable pair of ears to compensate for his blind eyes, prompted her to make such a request. This was the first time Stevie had been shown appreciation for his talented ears. Years later, he said that this act of appreciation was the beginning of a new life, from that time on he developed his gift of hearing and went on to become, under the stage name of Stevie Wonder, one of the greatest pop singers and songwriters of the seventies.*

What that teacher did was reveal to Stevie his own riches. She appreciated his special talent and it sparked the belief in himself to hone his unique gift.

Take time and think about how you can help others see their talents.

## **Reach For the Stars**



### **Quote of the day:**

“One may not reach the dawn save by the path of the night” — Kahill Gibran

### **Think about it:**

The fear of failure often stops us from trying new things. Part of overcoming fear of failure is realizing that no one ever reaches every single goal he/she sets for him/herself.

Sometimes new priorities come into your life, or you realize something is not all that it is cracked up to be. Whatever the case may be, just because you don't complete a goal doesn't mean you are a failure. It just means you found out it's not for you, but you'll never know that if you don't give it a try.

Once you understand that it's impossible to meet every goal you set for yourself, it takes the pressure off and will allow you to feel more confident to reach for the stars.

Help yourself to take a chance. Write down one dream you've always wanted to go after but have been too afraid to set. Then, write down the steps you need to take to reach that objective and take the first one.

## Exercise



### Quote of the day:

“To keep the body in good health is a duty.... Otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.” — Buddha

### Think about it:

Some of us think that we have no time to exercise, and, I'm sorry to say that I have thought that way at times. However, exercise is important not only to our physical body but also to our state of mind. When we are doing physical activity it releases endorphins into our body, which increases our sense of well-being and makes it easier to approach the challenges of life positively.

After considering the major benefits of exercise I'm of the same opinion as Stephen Covey when he said, “We don't have time not to [exercise]. We're talking about three to six hours a week - or a minimum of thirty minutes a day, every other day. That hardly seems an inordinate amount of time considering the tremendous benefits in terms of the impact on the other 162 - 165 hours of the week.”

If you don't already have an exercise program, why not start by taking a walk today and begin to keep your “mind strong and clear”.



## Destroy Your Inner Critic



### Quote of the day:

“If you hear a voice within you say “you cannot paint,” then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.” — Vincent van Gogh

### Think about it:

Never tell yourself or let anyone else tell you, you cannot do something. You alone conclude the limitations that you set upon yourself. If you want to do something, just do it. Get rid of negative influences in your life and destroy your inner critic that tells you that something is impossible for you to attain. We all have gifts and talents. Find out what yours are and start using them. Discover your genius.

Try this exercise: With pen and paper in hand, draw a line down the middle of the paper. On one side list the things that exist in your life that are pulling you towards the negative, on the other side, list the things that pull you towards the positive. See how they compare, which one outweighs the other? Now take a second sheet of paper and make a list of positive steps you can take to eradicate the negative influences you have listed then get to work knocking those points off your list, one step at a time.

## Successful Failures

# SUCCESSFUL FAILURE



### Quote of the day:

“A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.” — George Bernard Shaw

### Think about it:

To improve your self confidence, learn from successful failures.

*Ty Cobb was thrown out more times trying to steal bases than any other player in baseball history and Babe Ruth struck out more times than anyone in also baseball history. And Hank Aaron, who broke Ruth's home-run and strikeout records, struck out more often than 99 percent of the players who make it to the majors.*

*Enrico Caruso's voice failed to carry the high notes so many times his voice teacher advised him to quit. Caruso kept singing and was recognized as the greatest tenor of his day.*

*Thomas Edison's teacher called him a dunce, and he did fail over 14,000 times in his efforts to perfect the incandescent light.*

*Abraham Lincoln was well known for his lack of success, but nobody considers him a failure.*

*Albert Einstein and Werner von Braun both flunked courses in math.*

*Henry Ford was broke at age 40.*

*Vince Lombardi became the most revered football coach since Knute Rockne, but at age 43 he was only a line coach at Fordham University.*

*Few people even remember these men's failures and virtually everyone remembers their successes.*

Don't be afraid of failure. Step out and try.

## The Storm Beaten Tree



### Quote of the day:

“Good timber does not grow with ease, the stronger the wind, the stronger the trees.” — Willard Marriott

### Think about it:

This reminds me of a tree story that has been a help to me in times of tempest.

*A group of buyers were going through a great furniture factory, when their guide, the superintendent, pointed out a superbly grained and figured sideboard in natural wood. "I want you to observe the beauty of this oak," he said. "It is the finest selected timber of its kind, and the secret of the intricate and beautiful graining is just this: that the trees from which it was taken grew in a spot where they were exposed to almost constant conflict with storms."*

*It seems that the storm-beaten tree develops the closest and finest and most intricately woven fibers. When it is cut down and the saws lay bare its exquisitely figured grain, the cabinetmaker selects it as the material for his finest work.*

So it is with a human life beset by sorrows, tests and trials.

Next time you are in the middle of adversity, obstacles and troubles, remember this story about trees. Those which have been exposed to adversity and rocked to and fro by the struggles of this life are made stronger and more beautiful.

## Support Team



### Quote of the day:

“When you choose your friends, don't be short-changed by choosing personality over character.” — W. Somerset Maugham

### Think about it:

It is important who your friends are as they will influence you on many different levels. It's not easy to choose good friends for many different reasons, however the quote above offers good advice.

In addition, there is a fable by Aesop who is believed to have been a Greek slave in 6th century B.C. that might help in friend finding.

*A hungry wolf saw a mountain goat eating some grass very near the edge of a high cliff. "My dear friend Goat," cried the wolf in a very concerned voice, "Aren't you afraid you will get dizzy and fall and hurt yourself?" But the goat just kept on eating the grass.*

*The wolf tried again. "Isn't it terribly windy up there so high with no shelter at all?" The goat went on plucking the grass. "Besides," shouted the wolf, "I am sure that you will find the grass down here is much sweeter!"*

*The goat finally looked down and replied: "Friend Wolf, are you really so concerned about me? Or are you only interested in me because you want me for your own dinner?"*

Watch out for people who pretend to love and care for you and may even flatter you with nice words, but are only in the relationship for themselves and what they can get out of you.

February  
Day 32  
Attitude

## Laughter

“LIFE  
IS BETTER  
WHEN  
YOU’RE  
LAUGHING”

### Quote of the day:

“I live by this credo: Have a little laugh at life and look around you for happiness instead of sadness. Laughter has always brought me out of unhappy situations. Even in your darkest moment, you usually can find something to laugh about if you try hard enough.” — Red Skelton

### Think about it:

I love the following story. The choices this young man made influenced a lot of people for good.

*Jerome K. Jerome was a British writer whose father died when he was 12. At age 14, he had to go to work to support his mother and sister. His life got even harder when his mother died, but after many different jobs, the end result was that he became a writer—not of sad stories, but a famous humorist, writing funny stories to encourage others. After such a difficult beginning in life, he said, “It is from the struggle, not the victory, that we gain strength.”*

Maybe he was influenced by Mark Twain when he said, “The best way to cheer ourselves up is to try to cheer somebody else up.” There is enough good and bad in everyone’s life—ample sorrow and happiness, sufficient joy and pain—to find a rational basis for becoming either an optimist or pessimist. We can choose to laugh or cry, bless or curse. It’s our decision. Which perspective do we want to view life?

## Change Your World



### Quote of the day:

"Be the change you wish to see in the world." — Gandhi

### Think about it:

Sustaining the environment has become a serious concern of nearly every nation. Debates on how to best achieve this are continuous and often contentious. Overwhelmed by the complexity of the issue, most of us look to scientists and others with more knowledge and resources to find solutions.

However, Abdul Kareem is one man who hasn't waited on anybody else. Here is his story.

*If you were to visit him at his home in southern India, you would see acres of rich forest with abundant wildlife. In a part of the world where water is often in short supply, his land and the villages around it have no such problem. But it hasn't always been that way. Twenty-five years ago, the area was a series of dry, rocky, lifeless hills.*

*Kareem was strangely drawn to the area during visits to his wife's family, who lived there. "I would walk around the area and see barren hillsides," he recalls. "It was a heartache of a sight, and yet the pull on me was strong. I suddenly realized that I had often—though only for brief moments—dreamt of the Kaavu of India's collective memory. They were the Sacred Groves that every village had once upon a time. I had been told of them as a child. I think I had subconsciously yearned for one."*

*On an impulse, he bought five acres. In spaces between rocks, he planted saplings of trees native to the region. The well on the property barely yielded a bucketful of water at a time, so for three summers Kareem used a motorbike to haul water from a source a kilometer (about 2/3 mile) away. During this time he also bought adjoining land from neighbors who were happy to exchange their desolate properties for cash. The fourth year, Kareem's efforts began to pay off. The new vegetation, sparse as it was, helped his land retain more rainwater. The water level in his well rose, and that made it possible for him to gradually plant and tend the rest of his property, which had grown to nearly 13 hectares (32 acres). The transformation was slow but steady. As the saplings grew, birds flocked to the area and sowed the seeds of a variety of other plants. A natural revival was underway. Year by year, more vegetation grew, more wildlife arrived, and the water table continued to rise. As a result, other wells within a 10 kilometer (6.2 mile) radius of Kareem's, now also have more water. With few resources at his disposal, Kareem has changed his part of the world, day by day and step by patient step. – Source: [www.goodnewsindia.com/Pages/content/inspirational/abdulKareem.html](http://www.goodnewsindia.com/Pages/content/inspirational/abdulKareem.html)*

This is just one man's story on how he changed his part of the world. We can all do something, even if it's not as grand as this, but every bit helps.



## Is It Time to Start the Change Process?



### Quote of the day:

“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.” — Max Depree

### Think about it:

We sometimes need to shed old memories, habits and other past traditions in order to move forward. Only when freed from past burdens, can we take advantage of the present. But you may ask, “But why is change needed?” Many times, in order to survive we have to initiate a change process no matter how painful it might be. This reminds me of the story of the eagle.

*The eagle has the longest life-span among birds. It can live up to 70 years, but to reach this age, the eagle must make a hard decision. When it reaches 40 years its long and flexible talons can no longer grab its food. The eagle’s long sharp beak becomes bent and its old-aged heavy wings, due to their thick feathers become stuck to its chest and makes it difficult to fly.*

*The eagle is left with only two options: die or go through a painful process of change which lasts 150 days. The process requires that the eagle fly to a mountain top and sit on its nest. There, the eagle knocks its beak against a rock until it plucks it out. After plucking it out, the eagle will wait for a new beak to grow back and then it will pluck out its talons. When its new talons grow back, the eagle starts plucking its old-aged feathers. After five months the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and lives for 30 more years.*

Do you need to start a change process in your life? Although it seems painful for the eagle, there is no other alternative but to change or die. So take heart, and the next time you are faced with the need to change, remember the story about the eagle.

## Looking With the Eyes of Potential



### Quote of the day:

"My mother was the making of me. She was so true and so sure of me, I felt that I had someone to live for—someone I must not disappoint. The memory of my mother will always be a blessing to me." — Thomas A. Edison

### Think about it:

Mothers are wonderful and have a great influence on their children. However, you can have the same good influence on others if you always look at others with eyes of potential as is portrayed in the following story.

*A partially deaf boy came home from school one day carrying a note from officials at the school. The note suggested that the parents take the boy out of school, claiming that he was "too stupid to learn."*

*The boy's mother read the note and said, "My son, Tom, isn't 'too stupid to learn.' I'll teach him myself." And so she did.*

*When Tom died many years later, the people of the United States of America paid tribute to him by turning off the nation's lights for one full minute. You see, this Tom had invented the light bulb—and not only that, but also motion pictures and the record player. In all, Thomas Edison had more than one thousand patents to his credit.*

You never can tell what an influence you will have on a person when you have a little faith in them.

## You Are Not a Victim



### Quote of the day:

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. ... The people who get on in the world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.” — George Bernard Shaw

### Think about it:

Every problem we face leads us to one of two choices. Either we choose to be victorious, or we choose to be a victim. Either we choose to be responsible for the life we create, or we shirk our responsibility by blaming others for our failures and unhappiness. Those who choose to be victorious don't find life to be a struggle. They don't encounter problems; they merely face things they wish to change. When they find something blocking their way, they look for a way to get around it, or to overcome it. On the other hand, those who choose to be victims are experts at looking for excuses and find others to blame for their self-inflicted misery.

Here are two real-life examples:

*Carl wishes to recover from a long string of failures. To this end, he enrolled in a college course to update his skills. One day, when the instructor was writing on the blackboard, he shouted from the back of the room, “Write larger! I can't read what you're writing.” Carl was miffed when the instructor ignored his pleas. A few weeks later, he complained to his classmates, “I'm afraid I'll have to drop out of this course. I have bad eyes and our teacher writes too small. How can I take notes and learn the material? Our instructor doesn't seem to care about my disability.” “Why don't you come to class early so you can get a seat in the front of the room?” suggested a classmate. “Because the bus in my area runs only once an hour if I took the earlier bus, I would arrive much too early.” replied Carl. “Get a pair of glasses.” another classmate advised. “I have a pair,” said Carl, “but they are not very helpful.” Carl had an answer for every question. Although he could never find solutions for whatever was troubling him, he was proficient in finding excuses for his inaction. He was convinced he had certain “disabilities” that warranted special treatment.*

*Kyle Maynard is entirely different. Born with stumps in the place of arms and legs, he believed it was his responsibility to adapt to the world rather than demanding the world change for him. Despite the enormous obstacles it didn't prevent him from learning how to write and type. Neither did it prevent him from becoming a defensive lineman on a football team, a university student, and a top wrestler. He is also an accomplishments author, world traveler, and motivational speaker. Kyle realizes that making excuses holds us back, while assuming responsibility moves us forward.*

Sometimes it is easier to blame circumstances, problems, or even other people for our situation, instead of taking responsibility ourselves to change things. I have found that when I stop whining and feeling sorry for myself, I have the power to change situations as a result of choosing a positive attitude. While present circumstances may bring temporary limitations, if we choose to not be the “victim” and instead focus on the positive, keeping our eyes ahead on the desired change, and get busy working towards that change, eventually change will become our reality.

Which are you a problem solver or a victim?

## Believe Something Can Happen



### Quote of the day:

"Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them." — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

*In the "Star Wars" movie, The Empire Strikes Back, Luke Skywalker flies his X-Wing Ship to a swamp planet on a personal quest. There he seeks out a Jedi master named Yoda to teach him the ways of becoming a Jedi warrior. Luke wants to free the galaxy from the oppression of the evil tyrant, Darth Vader. Yoda reluctantly agrees to help Luke and begins by teaching him how to lift rocks with his mental powers.*

*Then, one day, Yoda tells Luke to lift his ship out from the swamp where it sank after a crash landing. Luke complains that lifting rocks is one thing, but lifting a star-fighter is quite another matter. Yoda insists. Luke manages a valiant effort but fails in his attempt. Yoda then focuses his mind, and lifts out the ship with ease.*

*Luke, dismayed, exclaims, "I don't believe it!"*

*"That's why you couldn't lift it," Yoda replied. "You didn't believe you could."*

That is often our problem in life we don't believe something can happen. We are limited by our belief. Don't let your limiting beliefs stop you from reaching your full potential.

## You Don't Have To Be a Millionaire



### Quote of the day:

“No one has ever become poor by giving.” — Anne Frank

### Think about it:

This story goes right along with the quote and puts skin on the principle. It's one of my favorites. I've since tried putting this wise counsel into practice myself—it really works!

*It was in the early 1970s and my wife and I were living in London on a shoestring budget, staying at the cheapest boarding house we could find and spending as little money as possible. We had gone for a coffee at our favorite restaurant, and were chatting with our friendly waitress. She had taken the job in order to support her family since her husband had become ill but she didn't complain.*

*“I wish I had enough money to give these dear people what I know they need. This poor waitress works so hard and I know she's not making as much as she needs. We don't have much money ourselves, but we could tip her a pound. You know I always wished I was a millionaire so I could really give like I'd like to.”*

*“You don't have to be a millionaire to give what you've got,” the voice in my heart spoke. “You've got five pounds, so why not give them all to her? Give what you've got and you will get in return!” And so I did.*

*I began giving double tips to the waitresses, the bus drivers, and to the newspaper vendors. From that moment we began to receive the benefits of giving. As we gave sacrificially from what we already had then more came back to us. Soon we began receiving more money for our living expenses.*

How much have you given lately? Let the universe give through you and you'll soon find the universe gives you more. Try it!

## The Dog and the Moon



### Quote of the day:

“When men speak ill of thee, live so as nobody may believe them.” — Plato

### Think about it:

I read the following great story about criticism and how to deal with it. I hope it's helpful to you.

*Once there was a man who did the best job he could. But being human, he made mistakes and was criticized. Reporters wrote about his errors in the newspaper. Well, he became so upset that he drove out into the country to visit his dear friend, a farmer.*

*“What am I going to do?” the man asked. “I’ve tried so hard. Nobody has tried harder than I have to do more good for more people, and look how they criticize me!”*

*But the old farmer could hardly hear the complaint of his persecuted friend because his hound dog was barking up a storm at the full moon. The farmer rebuked his dog, but the dog kept barking. Finally, the farmer said to the friend, “Do you want to know how you should handle your unfair critics? Here’s how. Listen to that dog; now, look up at the moon. And remember that people will keep yelling at you. They’ll nip at your heels, and they’ll criticize you. But here’s the lesson: The dog keeps howling, but the moon keeps shining!”*

Is someone criticizing you unjustly? Just keep shining or as the quote says, live in such a way as nobody will believe them.



## No Regrets



### Quote of the day:

“Live as you will wish to have lived when you are dying.” — Christian Gellert

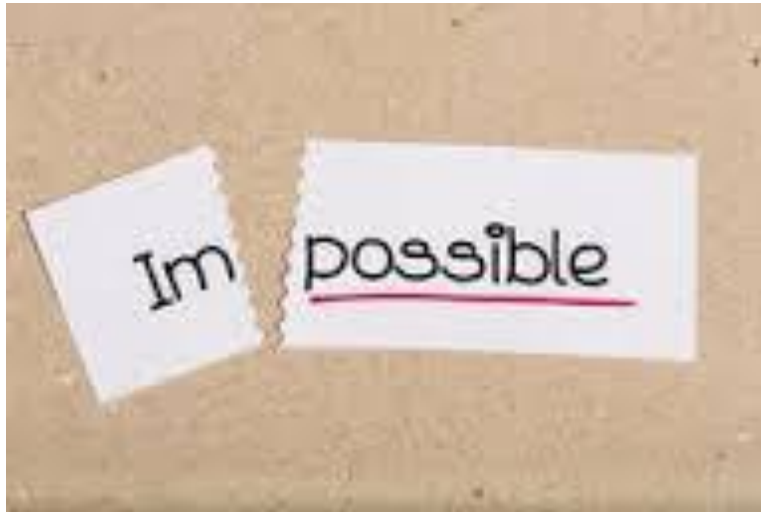
### Think about it:

Have you ever wondered if you would have regrets at the end of your life and how you can minimize them? I have. I came across an article by a lady who cares for the terminally ill and her discovery of the top five regrets people have at the time of their passing. I'm sure there are others, but this list may help you, as it has me, to start reflecting on the importance of life and to set your priorities straight now rather than later.

1. Courage to live a life true to themselves, not the life others expected of them. It is important to do at least some of the things we want to do because the moment that we lose our health, it is too late.
2. Not to have worked so hard. It is possible to not need the income that we think we do.
3. The courage to have expressed their feelings. Many people suppress their feelings in order to keep peace with others which causes some to develop illnesses relating to the bitterness, resentment and lack of forgiveness.
4. That they had stayed in touch with their friends. When we are faced with our approaching death, the physical details of life fall away and the importance of love and relationships become crystal clear.
5. That they had let themselves be happier. What others think of us is most likely a long way from our mind but the moments of happiness we missed or let slip by might be.

Do any of these ring true in your heart? If so, do something about it today so that you won't have any regrets.

## I'm Possible



### Quote of the day:

"Nothing is impossible, the word itself says 'I'm possible!'" — Audrey Hepburn

### Think about it:

I greatly appreciate this quote and find it gives me great strength when I am faced with a would-be impossibility.

I saw an Adidas ad one time that I thought was interesting and goes along with this sentiment. Here's what it said:

*Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing.*

Most of the great work in this world was achieved by men and women who didn't believe that what they were doing was impossible. Is there something that you would like to accomplish in life that the word *impossible* is stopping you from trying?

## Don't Be Indifferent



### Quote of the day:

“The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.” — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

Albert Einstein said this many years ago but from all I can see, the world has only gotten worse and society as a whole has become even more indifferent to helping those in need.

*In 2004 there was a drama on BBC1 entitled 'Passer By'. James Nesbitt played a radiographer by the name of Joe Keyes. Late one night he is travelling home by train, and he sees a young girl. A number of fellas start to chat her up and when the banter becomes threatening, Joe is faced with a dilemma—he is unsure whether he should intervene or not. When he reaches the station he glances across at this girl, who seems to be appealing for help. He just doesn't know what to do, should he stay on the train, or should he get off and get involved, or should he just go home? After the two episodes of that drama, the viewers were invited to give their opinion.*

*I don't know what the figures were of the percentage of people who said 'You should intervene, Joe', and those who said 'Leave well enough alone, don't get into trouble yourself'. I imagine that the sentiment was to help, but in practical terms, in everyday experience, we often find that people don't any more, they walk on by.*

*That was only a TV program but there have been many similar incidents documented and just as many, if not more, non-documented incidents. To name a few, I remember years ago hearing the story of a mail man who was shot by a sniper. He stumbled into a hotel lobby and was ordered out of the building because he was dripping blood on the carpet. A woman gave birth unexpectedly on a footpath, and the bystanders turned their faces. A taxi driver looked, and then sped away. A nearby hotel refused her even a blanket. In the United States, a woman drove her car into the Miami River. A dozen people watched, totally indifferent, as she climbed onto the roof of the car. The car was sinking and she screamed that she couldn't swim, and that woman drowned as the people watched her.*

You might think these are extreme cases, perhaps they are, but nevertheless they illustrate how things are in our modern world. Take a moment to think about what you would have done in those situations. Are you indifferent to the needs around you?

## Shake It Off and Step Up



### Quote of the day:

“What seems to us as bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.” — Oscar Wilde

### Think about it:

How true! Often it is how we look at the situation that determines if we will be defeated or triumphant.

*A story is told of a farmer who owned a mule. One day the farmer found that it had fallen into an old dried up well. In hopes of helping the mule to escape he decided to fill the well with dirt. Of course the mule didn't know what was happening and at first was freaking out with each blow of dirt to his back, but a funny thing happened as the farmer continued dumping dirt on the mules back, he would shake it off and step up. This he did, blow after blow.*

*Shake it off and step up. No matter how close together or painful the blows or how distressing the situation seemed, the mule fought against panic and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up. It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly out of the well.*

There is a good lesson to be learned from the old mule. If you sometimes feel like you are being buried under a mountain of troubles, just shake them off and step up and soon you will find yourself at the top and triumphant.

## Do Your Best No Matter What



### Quote of the day:

“Do the common thing in an uncommon way.” — Booker T. Washington

### Think about it:

There are many stories about doing your best even if the circumstances seem as if nothing good will come of it. Here is one such story.

*George Matheson grew discouraged over his small crowd one winter's evening in Innellan, Scotland. He had worked hard on his sermon, but the sparse numbers and empty chairs nearly defeated him. But his motto was, “Make every occasion a great occasion,” you can never tell when somebody may be taking your measure for a larger place.”*

*So nevertheless he did his best, not knowing that in the congregation was a visitor from St. Bernard's Church in Edinburgh. This rather large church was in need of a pastor. Matheson had no idea that “somebody was taking his measure for a larger place”, but because he did his best “making this occasion a great occasion”, in spite of the small turn out, he was chosen for the new and better position at St. Bernard's Church.*

Although this story is about a pastor, the principle still holds true. It is important to always do your best no matter what, as this shows your best character, and you never know when you will be rewarded for that.

## Love



### Quote of the day:

“Life is short. Be swift to love! Make haste to be kind!” — Henri Frederic Amiel

### Think about it:

*I heard this story about someone who was always seeking a new love, but never finding one that satisfied or lasted, the reason being, this person was always seeking to get love, to receive love, to be loved. One day, someone suggested to the seeker of love, that perhaps they needed to learn how to give love—to love unselfishly for the benefit and happiness of another.*

*After years of searching, these words hit home as an entirely new thought that had never occurred before. And so, they decided to give it a try and set out in pursuit of someone they could “give” love to. It wasn’t long before they found what they were looking for all along—all because they went in search of someone whom they could make happy by giving love to them.*

If you've been looking for someone to make you happy, why not try reversing the process—look for someone who you can make happy, and then happiness will find you!



## Celebrate Yourself



### Quote of the day:

"Love yourself first and everything else falls into line." — Lucille Ball

### Think about it:

Gratitude is a discipline and is something wonderful to incorporate into your life. When you are giving thanks, do not overlook being thankful for the wonder of *yourself*. Besides being grateful for the things that surround you, be sure to show a little appreciation for what an amazing person *you* are. We all have inner qualities or ways of being that serve us and others and they deserve to be acknowledged and appreciated, too.

Why not have some inner gratefulness and be thankful for the inner things that are often overlooked. Such as your commitment to personal and character growth, or the discipline of taking quiet time to reflect, the courage to take risks and conquer your own limiting beliefs, or your dedication to relationships, and the list goes on.

Celebrate and be thankful for the inner gifts you have and the ones you are developing—for they are of great value and are what shape your amazing life.

## The Pig and the Cow



### Quote of the day:

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can." — John Wesley

### Think about it:

This is a cute story, based on truth.

*A rich man said to his minister, "Why is it everyone is always criticizing me for being miserly, when everyone knows that I have made provision to leave everything I possess to charity when I die?"*

*"Well," said the minister, "let me tell you about the pig and the cow. The pig was lamenting to the cow one day about how unpopular he was.*

*"People are always talking about your gentleness and your kindness," said the pig. "You give milk and cream. But I give even more. I give bacon and ham—I give bristles and they even pickle my feet! Still no one likes me. I'm just a pig. Why is this?"*

*The cow thought a minute, and then said: "Well, maybe it's because I give while I'm still living."*

Are you giving while you live?

## Merely Made of Paper



### Quote of the day:

“Most of our obstacles would melt away if, instead of cowering before them, we should make up our minds to walk boldly through them.” — Orison Swett Marden

### Think about it:

This reminds me of the story of a jail in a town in British Columbia, Canada, in the 1900s.

*It was used for many decades and never had a single breakout. Those inside the jail never knew that one of the walls was nothing but thin wood and papier-mâché. It had been cleverly made to look like stone and iron. So although the inmates were nothing more than a simple kick away from escape, they saw it as a solid prison. Their own minds and perceptions kept them bound in spite of the fact that there was no substance to what was holding them prisoner.*

Sometimes our walls of mind-sets and attitudes have no more substance or ability to bind our heart and mind than those paper-thin walls in this story, but we often are still as shackled and imprisoned as if they were bands and chains of iron and walls of stone.

What limiting belief is stopping you? Stop and think about what things are preventing you from reaching your full potential. Then, no matter how real the limiting belief may seem, try busting right through it, to see if it is merely made of paper.

## Looking Through a Keyhole



### Quote of the day:

“No matter what your past has been, you have a spotless future.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

I read this article by Janet Kluck, adapted from a podcast on Just1Thing, that I wanted to share with you. It's interesting, and a good way to look at plans that didn't turn out the way we'd hoped—dreams that break and shatter as we wonder what went wrong.

*Imagine there is a gorgeous painting hanging on the wall of an apartment. It was painted by a great artist and contains contrasts of images, colors, shapes, and elements if you could see it in its entirety. But you're not inside the apartment, and the only chance you have of seeing it at all is through the keyhole, where you can catch only a small glimpse of the darkest, most shadowed section. You might think, "What a dark and depressing painting! Why didn't the artist use brighter colors or grace the canvas with more light?"*

*This is so often our perspective of our own lives. We focus on the dark spots, the losses and perceived failures. But all the while, our life is a beautiful, colorful, joyful, and bright painting; the problem is that we are viewing it through a tiny keyhole. If we could just see our lives from a bigger, more complete perspective, so many other elements and colors and highlights would come into view, and that tiny image would be transformed into a marvelous masterpiece.*

Are you looking through the key hole or from a bigger more complete perspective?

## A Kick In The Teeth



### Quote of the day:

“All the adversity I’ve had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles have strengthened me... You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.” — Walt Disney

### Think about it:

When you hit bottom, when dreams give way to disappointment, when all you've worked so hard for goes to pieces, when life no longer holds any purpose or promise, you are tempted to despair.

That's when you must remember that you were created for a purpose, and that purpose isn't a single, one-time thing; it's multifaceted and complex. As long as you live, there will be something more you can accomplish and there is always more to get out of life.

The end of one dream doesn't mean the end of all dreams. Just as the seasons come and go in their cycle, periods of success or setback, fulfillment or disappointment, and emotional highs and lows come and go. You may be in the depths of despair now, but it won't last forever. The best may be just around the corner, a new season of fruitfulness and fulfillment, but you'll never know if you stop where you are.

## How Do You Care For Your Valuables?



### Quote of the day:

“Never forget that you are one of a kind. Never forget that if there weren't any need for you in all your uniqueness to be on this earth, you wouldn't be here in the first place.” — Buckminster Fuller

### Think about it:

If you were given a Rolls Royce, a Stradivarius violin, a precious jewel, or something else of great value, how would you take care of it? I think the answer is obvious. You would guard it and care for it to maintain its value.

You are given a life to care for—your own. How do you take care of it? Might I be correct to assume that sometimes you do not care for it as well as you do your other treasures? Every life is a beautiful instrument and work of art. Learn to use it and play it to the best of your ability. And most of all treat your life with the respect it deserves.

You may not have always been treated like a treasured instrument, but it is never too late to polish your finish and tune your strings. When you come to appreciate the preciousness of life, teach others what you have learned.



## End the Cycle



### Quote of the day:

“Without forgiveness life is governed by an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation.” — Roberto Assagioli

### Think about it:

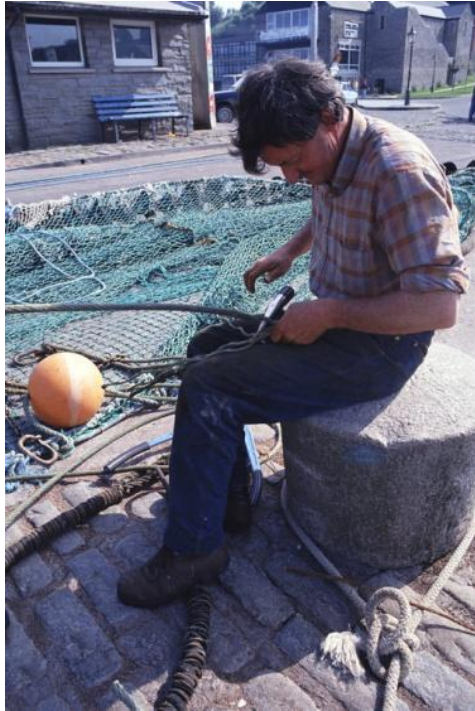
If you have deep hurt, and at one time or another in our lives we all do, today is a good day to let go of it. Today is a good day to forgive.

When we continue to hold grudges against people, we are allowing them to control us. This is because when we are mad at someone for something he or she did and we don't let it go, we continually replay what happened over and over in our minds. In essence, by continuing to replay the event, you are giving that person control over your thoughts and emotions.

Today is also a good day to ask for forgiveness. No one wants others to be thinking back on things they've done or said that have hurt them. We all want to be forgiven for the wrong we've done. Just think, if you want forgiveness for any wrong you've done, then it stands to reason that others who may have done something wrong towards you want the same thing. Others want forgiveness, just as you do.

Make the decision today to let go of a grudge you've been holding against someone and see what a difference it makes in your life. Take the first step to end the cycle—forgive today.

## Don't Let the Possible Danger Stop You



### Quote of the day:

“The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reasons for remaining ashore.” — Vincent Van Gogh

### Think about it:

Many things in life are dangerous, in fact most things are. However, we shouldn't let fear of taking a risk stop us from taking the necessary action to achieve our dreams just because we are afraid we'll fail along the way.

Like the quote says, if the fisherman would allow the fear of a storm to stop them they would never catch any fish. The same is true for you, if you allow the fear of failure to stop you from trying you will never reach your dream.

I'm not suggesting you need to be foolhardy and not count the cost and prepare for any possible dangers, I'm encouraging you to not let the dangers stop you from considering and preparing and overcoming them by taking the proper precautions.

Why not think about a dream you'd like to achieve in your life time and then think about what may be holding you back. Sometimes stopping long enough to face and acknowledge your fears is enough to get you headed in the right direction, then solutions often appear that you hadn't thought of before.

## Help Others Run Their Race



### Quote of the day:

“After the verb “to love”, the verb “to help” is the most beautiful verb in the world.” —Bertha von Suttner

### Think about it:

I read this story in the *Motivated* magazine. It is a touching story with a wonderful lesson for us all.

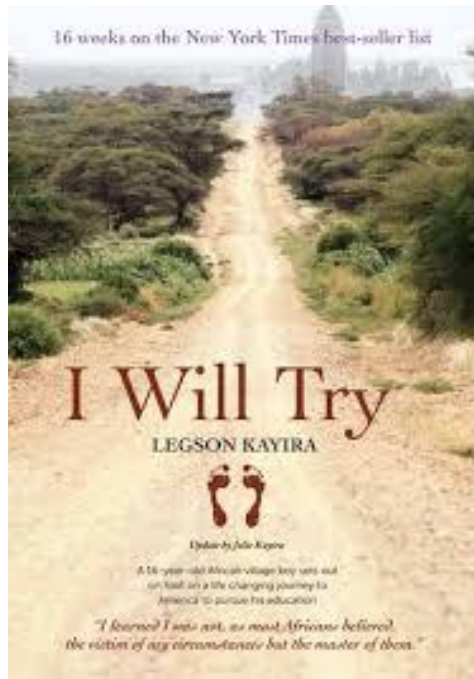
*A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or intellectually challenged, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the sound of the gun, they all started out—not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.*

*All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and looked back. When they saw what had happened, they all turned around and went back—every one of them. One girl with Down’s syndrome, upon reaching him bent down, kissed him, and said, “This will make it better.” Then all nine linked arms and walked across the finish line together.*

*Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story. Why? Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in life is more than winning for ourselves. What truly matters is helping others in their race, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.*

Are you helping others run their race?

## I Will Try



### Quote of the day:

“Believe and act as if it were impossible to fail.” — Charles F. Kettering

### Think about it:

Here is one of my favorite inspirational stories.

*A young African boy crossed over 3,000 kilometers of hostile jungle territory on foot because he had vision and determination. Legson Didimu Kayira was born in the 1940s to a life of total poverty in the Tumbuka tribe, Malawi, yet he dreamed of studying in the United States. When he was 16, he decided to make his way on foot to Egypt and find work on a ship sailing to the U.S. He left home with only a small ax, a blanket, a map of Africa, a map of the world, and two books—a Bible and a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Fifteen months later, Legson arrived in Kampala, Uganda, where he came across a directory of American colleges. He wrote to Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon explaining his situation and asking for a scholarship. The dean was so impressed he granted him both admission and a scholarship, while the student body collected \$650 to cover his fare. In December 1960, Legson finally arrived at Skagit Valley College, still carrying nothing but what he'd left home with two years before. Later, Legson became a professor at Cambridge University and authored six novels and the prizewinning autobiography, *I Will Try*.*

This young man didn't let his circumstances, lack of money or anything else stand in his way. It was not easy, and it took time, but he found a way to follow his dreams and was rewarded for it.

## Eudemonia



### Quote of the day:

“The vocation of every man and woman is to serve other people.” — Leo Tolstoy

### Think about it:

One of the central questions that philosophers and theologians have struggled with for millennia is the mystery of what gives life meaning. Everyone wants to be happy and fulfilled, but how can we tell what true happiness is and where it comes from?

The ancient Greeks believed that the source of happiness was internal and could be cultivated by living a worthwhile life. They called this state *eudaimonia*. Aristotle described it as taking part in activities that draw on our talents and challenge our abilities, acting in ways that benefit others, and guiding our lives by principles and virtues. It isn't enough to simply possess an ability or disposition—*eudaimonia* requires it to be put into action with deeds.

The more we learn to put others at the center of our thoughts and actions, the more meaning and purpose our lives will have.

## Choose to Be Happy



### Quote of the day:

“Each morning when I open my eyes I say to myself: I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead, tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I'm going to be happy in it.” — Groucho Marx

### Think about it:

We outline a good life according to the attitudes we choose to have. Our attitudes affect our lives and our happiness. If we want to be happy, we must make a conscious decision that we are going to be happy and then do our best to have a positive outlook on life. This way, we can fully enjoy life, no matter what circumstances may come our way.

Are you tired of having your emotions affected by the circumstances in your day? Choose to be happy, hopeful and positive, no matter what is going on around you. Your positive outlook will help you rise above petty negative emotions, and true happiness will find you.



## Imagine Yourself Succeeding



### Quote of the day:

“To be nobody-but-yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human can fight.” — E.E. Cummings

### Think about it:

It's often said that winning is better than losing. Success is infinitely preferable to failure. But when the emphasis is always on winning, we become overcautious and fearful of making mistakes. When the emphasis is on competition, winner skills develop at the expense of empathy, co-operation and compromise, the real life arts essential to human success.

Perhaps the most devastating effect of the “success ethic” is what we come to believe about ourselves—that we are valued for what we can produce or achieve, rather than for who we are. It is no wonder that we begin to think that being loved depends on winning.

The best motivators and coaches know that one reason to recognize achievement is to help people concentrate on images of themselves succeeding, and that such mental exercises have an undeniable effect on performance. Make a list of your achievements and talents and take pride in what only you have to offer the world.

## Walk A Mile



### Quote of the day:

“Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain—and most fools do. But it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving.” — Dale Carnegie

### Think about it:

A key to understanding others, and therefore, treating them right, is to put yourself in their place. Try mentally projecting yourself into their circumstances.

For example, before you ask someone to do something that may seem simple and straightforward to you, first consider whether that person will feel the same. Or, if someone is out of sorts or isn't being as productive as usual, think about what might be causing that person to act that way, perhaps they had a bad night's sleep, or maybe there are difficulties at home. This is a much safer way to operate than assuming the next person sees and feels the same way you do about things.

As the saying goes, 'walk a mile in another's shoes'. If you'll do this, you will be much more inclined to be understanding and supportive when any given situation calls for it. Then adjust your expectations or presentation accordingly; others will sense that you've anticipated their needs or concerns and that you've taken their limitations into account, and this will help you live and work together in better harmony. Empathy helps create unity of spirit, and that's a wonderful thing!

## Sincere



### Quote of the day:

“Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment.” — Anthony Robbins

### Think about it:

I learned some interesting information about the word sincere the other day. It turns out that “sincere” comes from a Latin word which means “without wax.” In ancient times, fine, expensive porcelain pottery often developed tiny cracks when it was fired in the kiln. Dishonest merchants would smear pearly white wax over the cracks until they disappeared, they would then claim the pottery was unblemished. But when the pottery was held up to the sun, the light would reveal the cracks filled in with wax. So honest merchants marked their porcelain with the words “sine cera”—without wax.

This got me thinking what is meant by genuine sincerity: No hidden cracks, no ulterior motives, no hidden agendas and the above quote took on a new meaning.

When was the last time you found deep joy and fulfillment by doing something for someone else with no hidden agendas or ulterior motives?

## Listening



### Quote of the day:

“I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen.” — Ernest Hemingway

### Think about it:

One of the most important communication and conversation skills is listening. If you prove yourself to be a good listener, then it's more likely that others will return the favor when you need a listening ear. Here are some specific tips on how to be a good listener:

- Give the person speaking your full attention. Make eye contact and avoid doing or looking at other things while the person is speaking to you.
- Take note of expressions and body language.
- Give little acknowledgments or signs to show your attentiveness—nodding or saying things like “That’s interesting,” or “I see.”
- Ask questions that will draw the person out more.
- Ask for clarifications when needed.
- Don’t interrupt. Be sure that the person has finished before you interject your comments or views. If you aren’t sure whether the person is finished, ask.
- Avoid comments such as “What you should do is ...” or “If I were you ...” unless the person specifically asked you for advice.

People appreciate those who they feel like and respect them enough to listen attentively to whatever they have to say—their ups and downs, their joys and troubles. People often aren’t necessarily looking for answers or advice, but they want to be able to express their feelings and to have the satisfaction of knowing someone else understands and empathizes with them. You pay people a high compliment simply by hearing them out.

How are your listening skills?

## The Twenty Dollar Bill



### Quote of the day:

"Too many people overvalue what they are not and undervalue what they are." — Malcolm Forbes

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of a story:

*A man said, "I am going to give this \$20 bill to one of you." Immediately he had everyone's attention.*

*"But first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the bill. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Every hand went up.*

*"Well," he went on, "what if I do this?" And he dropped the \$20 bill on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty, and asked again. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air.*

*"My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson," he said, "No matter what I did to the money, you still want it because it has not decreased in value. It is still worth \$20.*

Many times in our lives, we are crumpled, dropped and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless, but no matter what has happened or what may yet happen, you will never lose your value. Remember, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless.

## Stay Focused



### Quote of the day:

“No steam or gas drives anything until it is confined. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.” — Harry Emerson Fosdick

### Think about it:

It is a wonderful thing to have lots of creative ideas. However, if you don't have landing gear in place you may find so many ideas can be more of a hindrance than a help. Like the quote implies—it is just a bunch of hot air, but if you can harness those ideas and focus on one or two at a time, that energy can really take you places.

There are so many intentional and unintentional distractions that can get in our way of doing the most important things. It is important to discipline yourself to stay on task. If you need help to focus, set an alarm to ring on the hour. When the alarm sounds, do a focus check by asking yourself: Are you doing what you most need to be doing right now? Is what you are doing going to bring you closer to your end goal?

Then deliberately re-commit to not just what you are going to do over the next hour, but also re-commit to who you are going to become. This will help you stay focused and on track.



## The Power of Touch



### Quote of the day:

"A hug is a great gift . . . One size fits all, and it's easy to exchange." – Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Touching has many values. Besides benefiting the immune system, many studies have shown that touch can lower depression and hostility, and even boost survival rates of patients with some diseases. Neurologist Shekar Raman, in Richmond, Virginia, explains: "A hug, a pat on the back, and even a friendly handshake are processed by the reward center in the central nervous system, which is why it can have a powerful impact on the human psyche, making us feel happiness and joy. It doesn't matter if you're the *toucher* or the *touchee*. The more you connect with others—on even the smallest physical level—the happier you'll be." Research suggests that touch is fundamental to human communication, bonding, and health.

Dacher Keltner, PhD, when speaking about the benefits of touch said, "The benefits start from the moment we're born. A review of research, conducted by Tiffany Field, a leader in the field of touch, found that preterm newborns who received just three 15-minute sessions of touch therapy each day for 5–10 days gained 47 percent more weight than premature infants who'd received standard medical treatment." Studies show that touching patients with Alzheimer's can have huge effects on helping them to relax, make emotional connections with others, and reduce their symptoms of depression. Never under estimate the *power of touch* both for yourself and others.

I also read an interesting article a while back from Dr. Virginia Satir, a well known author and psychotherapist. In the article she is quoted as saying, "The recommended daily requirement for hugs is: four per day for survival, eight per day for maintenance, and 12 per day for growth." I have to confess, I don't even come close to receiving or giving that many hugs even though I'm a hug advocate. She goes on to say, "Our pores are places for messages of love, and being able to have physical contact is very important."

As Terri Guillemets say, "Be a love pharmacist: dispense hugs like medicine—they are!" So take time today to get and dispense your daily medicine by giving out eight hugs and if you want to do some growing, give out 12.

## Make A Man What He Should Be



### Quote of the day:

"Treat a man as he appears to be, and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be." — Johann Wolfgang Goethe

### Think about it:

Perhaps you've seen the classic movie "My Fair Lady", adapted from George Bernard Shaw's play, "Pygmalion." It is a story about a professor who makes a bet with this friend that he can turn an uneducated street girl, by the name of Eliza Doolittle, into an elegant lady. He does this primarily by treating her like a lady until she begins to live up to his expectations of her.

Don't you want to be treated like what you could be, rather than how you are? If you treat others in this way, it will come back to you in like manner.

Take time to consider who you are treating the way they appear to be, and thus you're making them worse, and who you are looking at with eyes of potential, and therefore, you're helping to make them into who they should be. Depending on your inward findings make the appropriate adjustments.

## Little Things



### Quote of the day:

“The best things in life are nearest: breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes, flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the path of right just before you. Then do not grasp at the stars, but do life’s plain, common work as it comes, certain that daily duties and daily bread are the sweetest things in life.” – Robert Louis Stevenson

### Think about it:

The following article is from Amanda White taken from *Activated Magazine*.

*The other day I was listening to a radio program on the way to the gym. Each day they ask a question for their listeners to respond to, either via phone or their Facebook page. The topic that day was: “What do you look forward to?” The answers that listeners were sending in were simple, yet refreshing. For example, one woman said she looked forward to having a cup of tea at night once her children were in bed.*

*It got me thinking about the simple things in life. Essentially, that’s what we all generally look forward to—the little things—a hug after a long day, a cup of something hot in the morning, the sun shining again after a rainy patch enabling us to finally hang our laundry, a comfortable bed to slide into at night, a refreshing shower, a freshly mowed lawn, a meal out. I like to see these small things as being as much a part of God’s love for me as the bigger gifts He sometimes sends my way.*

*Sure, sometimes we look forward to big and exciting things, like an upcoming vacation. But more often than not, it’s the simple day-to-day things that bring us joy and put a smile on our face. I’m reminding myself that I need to think more about those things, appreciate them more, as they get so easily lost amidst the craziness of life. It’s not a new realization by any means. It’s just one of those principles of life and happiness that easily fade out of focus when so many bigger and more stressful things are obstructing my view or weighing me down.*

*I decided to start small. I took that woman’s advice on the radio. I set aside a few minutes to relax with a cup of tea that night after the kids were in bed, and I enjoyed every sip!*

Are you thankful for the simple things in life? Why not start a praise journal and see how many simple things make you happy.

## Doing Good To Others



### Quote of the day:

"He who does good to another also does good to himself." — Seneca

### Think about it:

I'm ashamed to confess that, having lived in third world countries for years, being faced daily with beggars, and the overwhelming feeling that no matter how much I give, it's never enough, I allowed my heart to harden a bit, being in a financial slump myself at the time.

Thankfully the spirit of giving was able to get through to me, and the next time I saw a beggar sitting on the ground I knelt beside him and apologized that I didn't have much money to give him, but I said what I had I would give. I wish you could have seen the smile that suddenly lit up his face. He gave me such a warm look of gratitude, it definitely made my day. Each time I take the time to stop for a beggar, to listen to their story of misfortune—seeing their response, so warm and grateful, softens my heart. Clearly, I receive more than I give.

Whenever I start to feel a bit hardened to giving, I think back on this initial lesson learned and I'm moved to keep loving and to have a merciful outlook for those who, for one reason or another, have resorted to begging, knowing that in doing good to another I am also doing good to myself.

## Self-pity



### Quote of the day:

“Self-pity is our worst enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in this world.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

I suffered from self-pity for years. In my case, I was listening to my negative self-chatter. I would not only leave the door open for doubts to come in, but I would mull them over and over in my mind for hours on end. Pretty soon I was agreeing with all the negative talk going on in my mind. “Yes, that's right! I'm not perfect, and I don't have much to be happy about. I might as well quit!” But one day I realized what I was doing and ever since I have been on a mission to eradicate the negative chatter from my mind.

The minute you start listening to those negative voices, you're done for! It will never end until you are dragged to the very bottom and left utterly defeated. Don't let this happen to you. My advice is to slam the door on the negative talk—don't listen to it for one second.

Remember, that nobody is perfect, and even though you may have faults, this does not have to override all the good—your talents and good qualities that can help you succeed in life. Defeat your doubts by thinking happy positive thoughts. Sing, shout, start saying something cheerful and encouraging. Gratitude is the best defense against negative self-chatter.

## Unremembered Acts of Kindness



### Quote of the day:

"That best portion of a man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love." -- William Wordsworth

### Think about it:

Here's an interesting story about doing a kindness and it coming back to you.

*One day, a poor Scottish farmer while trying to make a living for his family, heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. The farmer saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.*

*The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the farmer's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy the farmer had saved. 'I want to repay you,' said the nobleman. 'You saved my son's life.'*

*'No, I can't accept payment for what I did,' the Scottish farmer replied waving off the offer.*

*At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel. 'Is that your son?' the nobleman asked.*

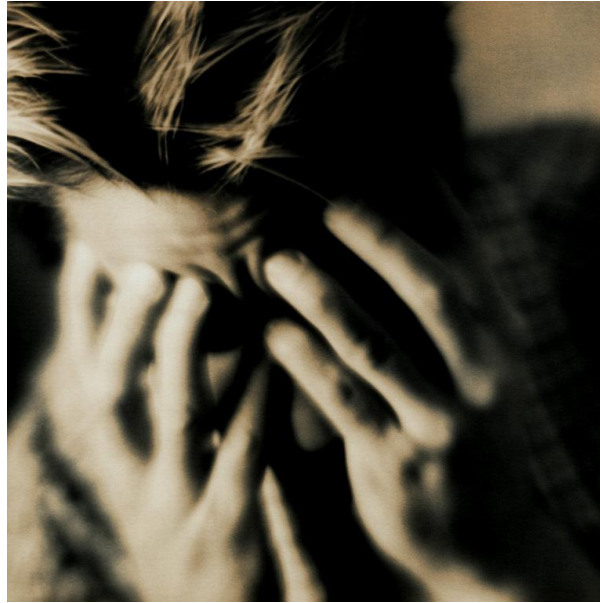
*'Yes,' the farmer replied proudly. 'I'll make you a deal. Let me provide him with the level of education my own son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of.'*

*And that he did. The farmer's son attended the very best schools and in time, graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin, but the story doesn't stop there. Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with pneumonia. What saved his life this time? Penicillin. The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.*

What if the farmer had not taken the time to save the boy? Think of all that would have been lost. You never know what a selfless act of kindness will lead to, or what your part is to play in our great journey of life. The next time you are faced with a choice to help someone remember this story.



## You Can Have a Fresh Start



### Quote of the day:

"If you have made mistakes, even serious mistakes, you may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing we call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down." — Mary Pickford

### Think about it:

Mistakes are common human occurrences which happen to every one of us during the course of our lives. A true story is relayed of a software executive who made a costly mistake for his firm that reminds me of the above quote.

*The CEO of the company called him into his office. The downtrodden software executive carried in his resignation letter and presented it to the CEO knowing that he deserved to be fired.*

*The CEO asked him why he was handing him such a letter, and instead told him the firm's investment and training in him was deserved, he wouldn't lose his job because of that one mistake, albeit costly.*

Have you made a mistake that left you in despair and feeling as though it is the end of the road? If so, stop and forgive yourself, realize that everyone makes mistakes. Then, if necessary, seek guidance and help in how to correct your mistake and pick up and carry on.

## True Values



### Quote of the day:

"It is good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things money can't buy." — George Lorimer

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of a story.

*One day a wealthy father, took his son on a trip to the countryside with the express purpose to show him how poor people live. They spent a day and a night on the farm of a very poor family.*

*When they got back from their trip, the father asked his son, "Did you see how poor people can be and what did you learn?"*

*The son answered, "I saw that we have a dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden; they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden; they have the stars. Our patio reaches to the front yard; they have a whole horizon." When the little boy was finished, his father was speechless. His son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how 'poor' we are!"*

How true, it's all a matter of perspective! If you have love, friends, family, health, good humor and a positive attitude towards life—you are richly blessed! These are all things that money can't buy. You may have all the material possessions you can imagine, provisions for the future, etc., but if you are poor of spirit, you have nothing!

Are there any things in your life that you take for granted?

## Forgiveness the Economy of the Heart



### Quote of the day:

“Forgiveness is the economy of the heart... Forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits.” — Hannah More

### Think about it:

The power to forgive is one of the greatest powers given to man. It is part of the nature and essence of God, and when you exercise it you assume godlike stature. You have the power to forgive and thus rise above the pettiness of mortals.

Choosing to forgive another is one of the hardest things most people ever do, especially to forgive something that is undeserved. It is difficult, because to forgive is not part of human nature. Human nature cries out for revenge and retribution. But why get stuck in human nature?

Whether that person who wronged you deserves forgiveness or not is not the core issue. The issue is you doing the right thing. No one really deserves forgiveness. If others have done wrong, they deserve justice. But forgiveness is greater than justice. Justice is human; forgiveness is divine.

Take time to consider if there is someone you need to forgive.

## Make What is Excellent in Others Belong to You as Well



### Quote of the day:

“Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.” — Voltarie

### Think about it:

When someone is elderly or sick and pretty much housebound, no longer actively involved in the world around them, they can feel isolated. It can be a very lonely life. It’s important for these people to know that their life, still matters and that their love and encouragement makes a difference in the lives of their loved ones and those they influence.

One idea to honor that special person (whether they be a parent, teacher, child, friend, spouse or whoever), especially if you cannot be by their side, is to write short notes of love and gratitude to them that can be given or read to them weekly or even daily. A friend of mine did this for her elderly mother. She sent her a one or two line note every week for a year before she died. Through these notes she acknowledged her love and gratitude to her mother on a regular basis. It was something in print and preserved so that her mother could read them over and over.

What my friend was doing through these notes was essentially a “living eulogy.” After her mother’s death, she was so grateful for letting her mother know how much her life had meant to her and so many others, before she left this life. By honoring the beauty of her mother’s life and the good that she had done, my friend was validating her life and acknowledging that her many years on this earth had been worthwhile. What better way to honor a person than to do it while they’re still living!

I thought you might find this idea useful as an example of a way to encourage others that their life matters and how much you appreciate them. Below are three example notes:

Dear (fill in the blank), Someone said, “Silent gratitude isn’t much use to anyone,” so I want to be sure I voice my gratitude to you for all that you have given and the beautiful life you have lived. I hope I can help you understand how precious that is to me and to others, and that, secure in this knowledge, you will know that your life truly has been worthwhile.

Dear (fill in the blank), You have made a great difference in my life and the direction I have taken. You helped guide me during those very difficult years, and for that I will be eternally thankful.

Dear (fill in the blank), I love your patience, your calm, your trust and generosity. I want to be more like you.

## Persist No Matter What



### Quote of the day:

"My learning disability gave me certain advantages, because I was able to live in the moment and capitalize on opportunities I spotted." — Paul Orfalea, founder of Kinko's

### Think about it:

Have you ever heard of Kinko? If not it is a chain of photo copying shops in the US. Here is the story behind the shop.

*When Paul Orfalea was a kid he acquired the nickname "Kinko" referring to his head of wild, curly, red hair. But teasing about his kinky hair was the least of his problems as Paul Orfalea struggled with severe dyslexia and ADHD—flunking second grade twice, graduated from high school at the bottom of his class, and eked through college with a "C" average. He had a hard time sitting still, and could barely read or write. No one ever voted him "most likely to succeed."*

*Paul applied for jobs and managed to get hired twice—but neither job lasted longer than a day. It was clear he wasn't cut out for traditional employment in a 9 to 5 world. He knew he was different and that somehow he'd have to find his own way in the world.*

*In 1970, living in a small college town near Santa Barbara, California, Paul noticed that there were always long lines at the copy machines. "Too many students and not enough copiers," he thought to himself. So he borrowed \$5000 and opened his own copier business in a tiny little 9x12 foot storefront close to campus. His space was so small that he had to move the copy machine out to the sidewalk to use it. He hawked pens and pencils from his backpack as he stood outside drumming up business.*

*People told him that he was crazy, but he'd been hearing that his whole life so he just ignored them. He knew his idea was a good one—he had the determination, energy, and persistence to pursue it despite what anyone said.*

*He worked long and hard, and within a year, he had made enough money to expand. Ten years later, there were 80 Kinko's stores in college towns all around the country. And in another ten years (1990) that number expanded exponentially to 420 stores—and doubled in another seven years to 840 stores!*

*This curly-headed kid with severe learning disabilities had built himself a hugely successful business simply by seeing a need and filling it. He understood his limitations, so he hired great people to do all the things he couldn't. He was the idea man—he hired others to execute his plans.*

*Finally, in 2004, Paul sold Kinko's to FedEx for \$2.4 billion.*

Paul didn't let his disabilities stop him from doing something. Take a lesson from this story and don't let your circumstances stop you from doing what you can.

## Laughter



### Quote of the day:

“Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone.” — Ella Wheeler Wilcox

### Think about it:

There’s such a thing as being too sober and taking things too seriously, especially ourselves. The ability to laugh at ourselves is a great asset and helps keep us humble. People who can’t laugh at their own silly mistakes or take the mistakes of others with a sense of humor are either too proud or have too severe a sense of life. Let’s be happy! Don’t be gloomy and sullen, lest you be like old Jenny the mule.

*After a Sunday of constantly hearing “no” and “don’t” at the farm of his strict grandfather, poor little Johnny wandered wistfully out to the barnyard and stroked Jenny’s long nose.*

*“Dear Jenny, you must be awfully good,” he said, “because you have such a long face—just like Grandfather’s!”*

That’s some people’s idea of goodness. Don’t let it be yours! Let’s always be able to smile through our tears. A ray of sunshine is even more beautiful in the midst of rain. Let’s have a little more happiness and laughter, and not so much gloom and doom. The world knows enough hell; let’s show them a little more joy.



## The Pain Passes But The Beauty Remains



### Quote of the day:

"The pain passes, but the beauty remains." — Pierre Auguste Renoir

### Think about it:

Here is the story behind the quote.

*The great French artist Renoir, in his later years, suffered severely from arthritis, which affected his hands so badly that it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could hold a brush. He struggled on bravely with his painting in spite of the pain.*

*A friend once asked him why he continued to paint when the physical agony was so great. Renoir replied, "The pain passes, but the beauty remains."*

How true that is. Surely there is an attitude here which can be applied to many difficult situations in our own lives.

## Don't Go Around Problems



### Quote of the day:

"Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than in trying to solve them." — Henry Ford

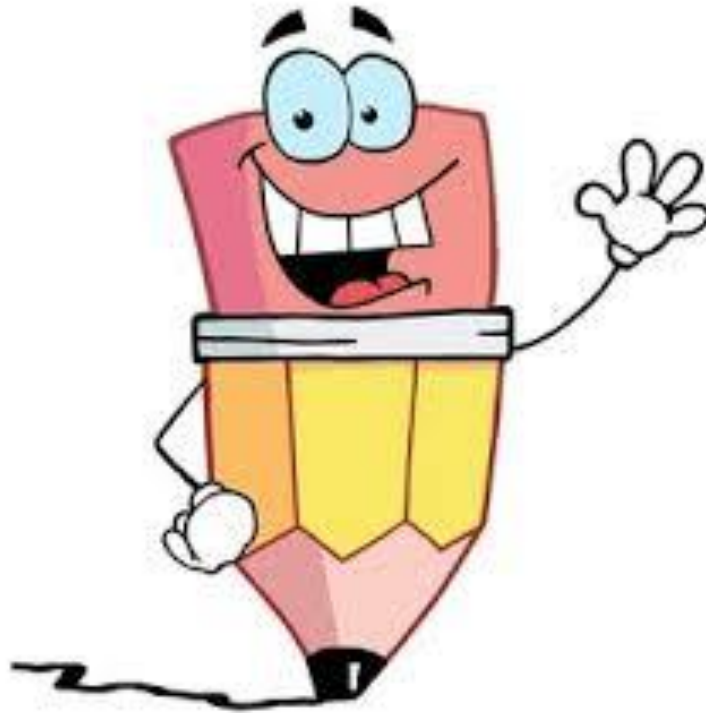
### Think about it:

*The story is told of a king who placed a heavy stone in the middle of the road and then hid and watched to see who would remove it. Men of various social standing came and worked their way round it, some loudly blaming the king for not keeping the highways clear, and others with varied complaints, but all dodging the duty of moving the stone out of the way.*

*At last a poor peasant on his way to town with his flock of sheep passed by, and contemplating the stone, laid down his load and rolled it into the ditch. Then, turning round, he spied a purse that had lain right under the stone. He opened it and found it full of gold pieces with a note from the king saying it was for the one who would remove the stone.*

The moral of the story—it's far better to go the extra mile to make a difference, to make the effort to solve the problem and remove an obstacle that stands in your way than to go around it. Who knows you may just find a buried treasure.

## The Pencil Maker



### Quote of the day:

“Do not wish to be anyone but who you are, and try to be that perfectly.” — Saint Francis DeSales

### Think about it:

This parable may encourage you to know that you are a special person, with unique talents and abilities.

*A pencil maker told the pencil 5 important lessons just before putting it in the box:*

- 1.) *Everything you do will always leave a mark.*
- 2.) *You can always correct the mistakes you make.*
- 3.) *What is important is what is inside of you.*
- 4.) *In life, you will undergo painful sharpening, which will only make you better.*
- 5.) *To be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you.*

We all need to be constantly sharpened. Only you can fulfill the purpose which you were born to accomplish. Never allow yourself to get discouraged and think that your life is insignificant and cannot be changed and, like the pencil, always remember that the most important part of who you are is what's inside of you.

## The Ice Cream Sunday



### Quote of the day:

“Courtesy is the one coin you can never have too much of or be stingy with.” — John Wanamaker

### Think about it:

*Years ago, a 10-year-old boy approached the counter of a soda shop and climbed on to a stool. "What does an ice cream sundae cost?" he asked the waitress.*

*"Fifty cents," she answered.*

*The youngster reached deep in his pockets and pulled out an assortment of change, counting it carefully as the waitress grew impatient. She had "bigger" customers to wait on.*

*"Well, how much would just plain ice cream be?" the boy asked.*

*The waitress responded with noticeable irritation in her voice, "Thirty-five cents."*

*Again, the boy slowly counted his money. "May I have some plain ice cream in a dish then, please?" He gave the waitress the correct amount, and she brought him the ice cream.*

*Later, the waitress returned to clear the boy's dish and when she picked it up, she felt a lump in her throat. There on the counter the boy had left two nickels and five pennies. She realized that he had had enough money for the sundae, but sacrificed it so that he could leave her a tip. —Adapted from A Lifetime of Success  
PAT WILLIAMS Fleming H. Revell*

The moral: Everyone in this world is important. We should always treat others with courtesy, dignity, and respect even to our own hurt.

## Pumpkin in a Jar



### Quote of the day:

"As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

The following story attributed to Earl Nightingale is an example of how we often limit ourselves, or let others limit us.

*One time there was a farmer who had planted a crop of pumpkins. Walking through his field when the pumpkins were just beginning to develop, he came across a glass jug, which apparently a passing motorist had thrown into his field.*

*As an experiment, he poked a very small pumpkin through the mouth of the jug, but he was careful not to damage the vine. Months later, when the field was fully developed and about ready for harvesting, the farmer, making one of his periodic inspections, again came across the glass jug. This time it was completely filled with the pumpkin he had put inside. The other pumpkins on the same vine were large and fully developed, but the pumpkin in the jug had not been able to grow beyond the confines of the glass prison and was shaped to its exact dimensions.*

What size and kind of jug are you going to poke yourself into or allow someone else to put you into? Don't let anyone limit you, even yourself.

## Two Dogs



### Quote of the day:

“Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.” — Aldous Huxley

### Think about it:

How true this quote is! It reminds me of a story of the two dogs:

*There once were two dogs, both at separate times walked into the same room. One came out wagging his tail while the other came out growling.*

*A woman observing this went into the room to see what could possibly make one dog so happy and the other so mad. To her surprise she found a room filled with mirrors.*

*The happy dog found a thousand happy dogs looking back at him while the angry dog saw only angry dogs growling back at him.*

Both dogs had the same experience but with different attitudes. What you see in the world around you is a reflection of who you are. Why not make it a happy experience?



## Has one life breathed easier because you lived?



### Quote of the day:

"To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

This story particularly spoke to me. As the Dalai Lama says, "Our prime purpose in this life is to help others." I don't know about you, but I often forget this.

*One day, as usually was the case, a young waif (little girl) stood at the street corner begging for food, money or whatever she could get. Now this girl was wearing very tattered clothes; she was dirty and quite disheveled. As it happens, a well-to-do young man passed that corner without giving the girl a second look. But when he returned to his expensive home, his happy and comfortable family, and his well-laden dinner table, his thoughts returned to the young waif, and he became very angry at God for allowing such conditions to exist.*

*He reproached God, saying, "How can you let this happen? Why don't you do something to help this girl?"*

*Then he heard God in the depths of his being respond by saying, "I did. I created you!"*

What are you doing to help those in need around you?

## Are You Hurting Yourself?



### Quote of the day:

“Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one getting burned.” — Buddha

### Think about it:

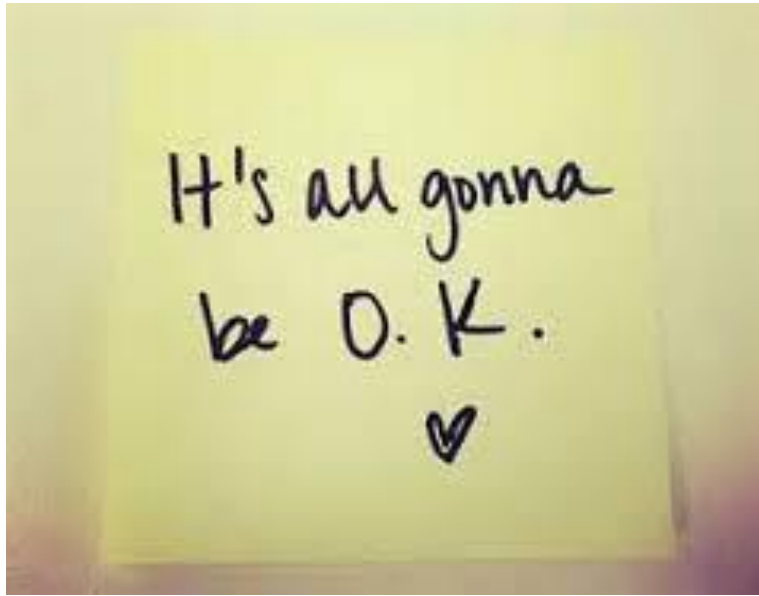
To go along with this great quote here is an old fable:

*A rodent which tried to gnaw at a nail file gnawed and gnawed and gnawed, until the pile of filings began to grow. He was overjoyed until he discovered that something was terribly wrong. The pile of filings were the remains of his own teeth and not the file. All his gnawing had no effect on the file. He ended up just hurting himself.*

So is it when we allow ourselves not to forgive.

Are you hurting yourself? Is there someone you need to forgive?

## Things Always Work Out For Me



### Quote of the day:

"Things are always working out for me." — Ester Hicks

### Think about it:

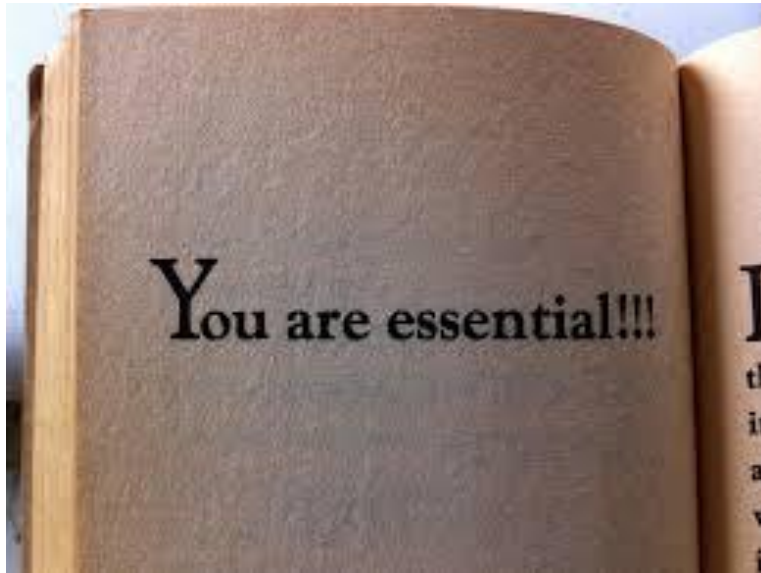
I love that quote as it rings so true. I decided I would believe things are always working out for me even when I wasn't quite sure yet. I've learned that deciding is an important action step, too. I started taking the attitude of expecting things to be easy, to be fun, to happen exactly when they should and in the best possible way. Of course, what supports this way of thinking is to be unattached to the outcome. That's why I also love trusting that everything happens for my highest good even when I don't yet realize it.

I'm already seeing how the expectation "things are always working out for me" is showing up in my life. I've been so excited about how this expectation has worked that I wanted to share it with you so you can use it, too. It's a comforting affirmation. Give it a couple of weeks and you'll be amazed by what happens. Plans will change effortlessly. Life will get easier.

Ready? Look up, put a big smile on your face, and repeat after me: "Things are always working out for me, things are always working out for me, things are always working out for me."

Use this affirmation to begin installing this expectation into your brain. The more you use it, the quicker you'll create a new neural pathway for this useful affirmation. Before you know it, life will start proving you right!

## Your Heritage



### Quote of the day:

“God loves you and is searching for you to bring you Home.” — Dana Bosley

### Think about it:

When I read this story it reminded me of the Easter story.

*According to legend, a beautiful queen was captured and carried away and became a victim of amnesia. She became a prostitute in the streets. She didn't know her name or the fact that she came from royal blood. But back in her homeland, friends didn't give up on her return. An old friend believed she was alive and went to look for her. He never lost faith. One day while wandering through the streets, he came to a waterfront and saw a wretched woman in tattered clothes with deep lines across her face.*

*There was something about her that seemed familiar, so he walked up to her and said, "What is your name?"*

*She gave a name that was meaningless to him. "May I see your hands?" he pursued. She held her hands out in front of her, and the young man gasped, "You are the Queen! You are the Queen! Do you remember?"*

*She looked up at him in astonishment. Then the fog seemed to clear. There was recognition in her face. The light came on! She discovered her lost self, put her arms around her old friend and wept. She discarded the tattered clothes and once more became the queen she was born to be.*

God searches for you in the same way. He uses every method possible to look for you and try to convince you of your heritage and your worth to him. And that is what Easter is all about finding your way Home and reuniting with God.

## Pause To Reflect On The Blessing



### Quote of the day:

"If you don't get everything you want, think of the things you don't get that you don't want." — Oscar Wilde

### Think about it:

Many people get so caught up in what they don't have that they overlook everything that they do have. It's important that we take the time to reflect on everything we've been blessed with and be grateful lest you forget them and lose them.

When we pause to reflect on the blessings that enrich our lives, even the small and most obscure ones, something deep within us changes for the best. Taking a minute to reflect on the joys, big or small, that come our way or exist in our life can lead to feelings of happiness, positive energy and good health.

Take a moment now, close your eyes and think about something that you are grateful for. Think of the things that have brought you happiness last week. You'll probably find a gem that brings a smile to your face and peace to your heart. Give thanks for that and watch how the rest of your day changes.

And if you have more time write down ten things that you've been blessed with. Include some things that others can't put a value on. Read over this list each morning to remind yourself of the things you have to be thankful for, and feel free to keep adding to your list.

## Surrounded By Wolves



### Quote of the day:

"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." — Charles Swindoll

### Think about it:

I read this cute story that illustrates how difficulties can be turned into opportunities. It's all in how we look at it.

*An organization in Montana offered a bounty of five thousand dollars for every wolf captured alive. Two hunters decided to head for the hills and make some money capturing wolves. Day and night, they scoured the mountains and forests, searching for their valuable prey. Exhausted after three days of hunting without success, they both fell asleep.*

*During the night, one of the hunters suddenly woke up to find that the two were surrounded by a pack of fifty wolves, their eyes flaming and teeth bared. At once, he called to his friend, "Hey, wake up! We're gonna be rich!"*

Sometimes we feel in over our heads in difficulties. They surround us like that pack of wolves preparing to pounce. But perhaps these obstacles are actually opportunities?



## Positive Self Talk



### Quote of the day:

"Your worst enemy cannot harm you as much as your own unguarded thoughts." — Buddha

### Think about it:

In terms of your thoughts and self-talk—the endless stream of thoughts that run through your head every day—it can be positive or negative, and so can its outcome. Positive self-talk promotes positive action and progress, while negative self-talk triggers discouragement and defeat.

*Is your glass half full or half empty? According to staffers at the renowned Mayo Clinic, your answer to this question reflects your attitudes toward yourself and life in general, each of which plays an important part in how well you live, and possibly even how long you live. It goes without saying that positive thinkers are far more likely to reach their goals than negative thinkers.*

If your thought patterns have that much bearing on your happiness and well-being, doesn't it make sense to stop from time to time and examine the way you think and work at making positive thinking a habit?

## Cause and Effect



### Quote of the day:

“Today is only one day in all the days that will ever be. But what will happen in all the other days that ever come can depend on what you do today.” — Ernest Hemingway

### Think about it:

Life is a great cycle of cause and effect. Everyone makes choices every day, and everyone's choices affect others. The combination of everyone's choices and the effect those choices have on others makes the world what it is.

Every problem can be traced to some unloving or selfish choice someone made. Selfishness and lack of love are the major cause of problems in the world today. People either don't see how their wrong choices affect others, or they don't care enough to do things differently.

You may feel that the world is too messed up, that too many wrong choices have been made, that it doesn't matter much what you do, that it's hopeless. But that's not true. Just as every problem can be traced to a wrong decision, every solution begins with a wise and loving decision to do the right thing, the loving and unselfish thing.

A little bit of love can go a long way, and each act of love makes a difference. One act of kindness or unselfishness can start a whole chain reaction of events that will, in the long run, make life much better for a lot of people. So don't despair because there is so much suffering and grief and wrong in the world. Instead, do what you can to make things right and encourage others to do the same. The world won't change in a day, but you can make a difference if you try.

## Every End Is a New Beginning



### Quote of the day:

“Every end is a new beginning.” — Author unknown

### Think about it:

You have most likely heard this story before about Thomas Edison but it is worth repeating as it has such a powerful lesson.

*The evening of December 9, 1914, an explosion set fire to a large scientific laboratory in West Orange, New Jersey. At least ten buildings were destroyed, along with years of research and development. Property loss alone was estimated at \$7 million (\$148 million in today's dollars).*

*“There go all our mistakes,” the laboratory's founder and CEO said as he watched the blaze. “Although I am 67 years old,” he told a New York Times reporter who was at the scene, “I'll start all over again tomorrow.”*

*The next morning's newspaper included a notice that all 7,000 of the lab's employees were to report for work immediately, to begin rebuilding.*

A disaster of lesser proportions would have demoralized just about anyone else, but years of trial and error had conditioned Thomas Edison to see disasters as opportunities. Most of the reversals you and I face aren't nearly as catastrophic, but they have two things in common with Edison's inferno. First, regardless of their nature, they present us with a choice: How will we react to our change of circumstances? Second, depending on how we react, such changes inevitably change us for better or for worse.

How do you react to adversity?

## Arguments



### Quote of the day:

"We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace." — William Gladstone

### Think about it:

Peace can never be achieved when people are fighting over power. It doesn't matter if you're trying to show your power by working your way up the corporate ladder, or fighting with your spouse about where to go for dinner.

The best way to stop fighting is to look for ways you can get along with others and to become aware of your arguments.

Try this:

Create a simple tracking sheet and start counting the amount of arguments you have every day with others. Total them up at the end of the day.

Do this for two weeks. You'll notice the arguments will start to decrease as you become more aware of the amount of arguments you engage in.

## Don't Sell Yourself Short



### Quote of the day:

“If I could buy you for what you think you're worth and sell you for what you really are worth, I'd make a FORTUNE!”  
— Author Unknown.

### Think about it:

How true, so often people think so little of themselves. This quote reminds me of the saying, “selling yourself short”. Don't let your limiting beliefs, lack of forgiving yourself, regrets, remorse or the gremlins of negative self-chatter sell you short one moment more. Fight that negativity with everything in you. And remember, each of us are very special, created exactly the way we are supposed to be—each unique, each priceless and precious.

Remember this the next time you are tempted to sell yourself short.

## Go Out On a Limb



**Quote of the day:**

"Why not go out on a limb? Isn't that where the fruit is?" — Frank Scully

**Think about it:**

Moving beyond our own personal limiting beliefs and fears is not always easy. When standing at the threshold of our limitations often our first reaction is to hesitate, even shy away from any attempt of launching out into the unknown, the difficult, or anything that would stretch us beyond our comfort zones. Our fear seems to immediately kick-in and we are tempted to listen to the inner negative voice above the calmer, steadier voice of faith and confidence.

As you're heading towards your goal, if fear comes knocking at your door, stop a moment and take stock of your situation. Is your goal consistent with the voice of truth within you? Do you have inner peace knowing the goals you're shooting for are what you're supposed to do? If the answer is yes, then trust that you will be given guidance at the exact time and hour you need it; then go ahead and climb out on that limb, trust, and expect success.



## Who You Think You Are



### Quote of the day:

"The best paintings have not yet been painted; the best governments are yet to be formed; the best is yet to be done by them." — Dwight D. Eisenhower

### Think about it:

I agree completely. The best is yet to be done—by you! There are enough buried reserves of capabilities and talents in you for you to achieve your wildest dreams.

However, who you are will always be consistent with who you think you are. That means if you believe you are not (fill in the blank) then you never will be. However, if you believe you are, then you will be. This side of the coin is actually the truth, but as long as you don't think it or believe it, then the other side of the coin will hold true.

Stop thinking about what you aren't and concentrate on what you are. You are unique and special and most of all, irreplaceable. Remember no man or woman has anything about him more valuable or precious than his own individuality. Celebrate that uniqueness. Let the world see the hue that is you.

## Boomerang



### Quote of the day:

"What goes around comes around. Keep your circle positive. Say good words, think good thoughts, do good deeds."  
— Author Unknown

### Think about it:

I'm a firm believer in the old sayings, "You reap what you sow", and "what you give comes back to you." This reminds me of the boomerang story told by Virginia Berg.

*When I was a little girl, I went to my first circus. There, before my awestruck eyes, were three rings in full action—performing animals in one, and acrobats leaping and flying through the air in another. What interested me most, though, was taking place in the third ring. A girl and a boy were flinging brightly colored missiles, which, after they had crossed the ring, turned and returned to the very hands that had flung them. No matter which direction they were thrown, the things curved and swiftly came back to the young performers, who would catch and fling them again. I watched in amazement.*

*"They are boomerangs," someone beside me said. It was the first time I had heard that word. Since then I have heard that word often. I've also seen the principle behind it play out in life. In fact, life itself is a boomerang.*

You either "fling" good or evil. Either way whatever you "throw out" will come back to you. Every word or action we fling out comes back to us in some way. Whether good or bad, it will return to us, and it often gains momentum along the way. When you give to others, you receive in return and surprisingly, many times over! You never lose by giving. The way you treat others is the way you will be treated. Anyone who lives unselfishly, caring for and lifting the burdens of others, easing their pain, and helping to supply their needs, will see that boomerang come back in the form of blessings some day!

What sort of boomerang are you throwing out?

## Can You See the Stars?



### Quote of the day:

“Two men looked out from behind prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars.” — Frederick Langbridge

### Think about it:

The first law of perception is that you see what you want to see. Your eyes do the seeing, but it's your mind that decides what you focus on. So in other words, you see what your mind is looking for.

Because of this the cynic and the optimist have never been able to agree on what they see. Because of their different philosophies of life they both see things differently, but which one is right? They both are—because both good and bad are all around us! Just like the quote above, the mud and the stars are both there. The cynic sees exactly what he's looking for. He sees there's no hope in the world. On the other hand, the optimist is also right, because he sees what he believes too. He sees the world of hope. Both of them are right. Both of them are actually choosing their experience. And both of them are choosing what they focus on.

If we have the choice, why choose unhappiness? I choose to see hope, goodness and love—the stars. I choose to be positive. What do you choose?

## Overcome Evil With Good



### Quote of the day:

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” — Apostle Paul

### Think about it:

This statement was written in first-century Rome. There are some obvious similarities between the social climate of Rome and of the world of today. Evil was rampant in Rome, and its pull was strong. The Roman Empire didn't become the undisputed ruler of the Western world through compassion, kindness, or humility. Wealth was in the hands of a few, and they used it to control the rest. The rich and powerful lived extravagantly while the masses struggled to survive. Sound familiar?

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the evil in the world. Every day we hear about horrendous crimes being committed. Meanwhile, the popular media searches for new and more horrific ways to portray violence, perversion, and every kind of evil. What can we do about a world so overcome with wickedness? Paul's counsel still rings as true as it was in his day. “Overcome evil with good.”

If a dish is dirty, being angry about the situation does nothing to fix it. Neither does trying to ignore it. The only solution is to expose that dirty dish to the power of a little soap and water.

It's the same with all the injustices in society today. We can get discouraged, angry, or depressed—*overcome by evil*—or we can be a force for good in the world, even if only through a personal example. Not every dirty dish will be cleaned, and not every darkened heart will be enlightened, but we can each do our part day by day, person by person, decision by decision.

What are you going to choose? I choose to overcome evil with good.

## Seeing From the Other Side of the Desk



### Quote of the day:

"Do not judge your neighbor until you walk two moons in his moccasins." — Cheyenne Proverb

### Think about it:

A friend of mine sent me this story that I thought I would share with you as it has a good lesson.

*I was doing some legal business and had to submit some paperwork, and to my dismay there were several things that needed to be changed. Something that at first appeared easy to rectify, instead took several weeks and numerous appointments to sort out.*

*At one of the offices where I had been sent, I came face to face with Mr. Grumpy. He struck me as efficient, but rather curt. We got off to a rough start. My problem was most likely the hundredth problem he had had to deal with that day, and it seemed I would get no sympathy from him. To make matters worse, his computer froze and he had to reboot.*

*Sitting there in the silence, I suddenly saw things from a different perspective. For a moment I put aside my aggravation with how things were going and tried to imagine what it was like to sit on the other side of that desk. As we waited for his computer to reboot, I asked if he had encountered my specific problem before. That was the beginning of a dialog between two tired, frustrated people.*

*Over the next few days, we spoke on the phone a number of times as I checked on the progress of my paperwork. Each time our communications grew friendlier and more relaxed, and when I visited his office to collect the finalized document, he took extra time to verify that everything was correct and we parted as friends.*

The moral of the story is taking a personal interest in someone else's problems had transformed a mutual ordeal into a mutually positive experience. What situation do you need to take a look at from the other side of the desk?

## Mr. Willey's Challenge



### Quote of the day:

“Make one person happy each day and in 40 years you will have made 14,600 human beings happy for a little time at least.” — Charley Willey

### Think about it:

How simple a thing to do! In today's world you hear so much about the bad, rude, inconsiderate things people do, not to mention the outright cruel, evil, mean and criminal things the papers report. You don't hear much about the good things people do, but wouldn't that be wonderful if we did.

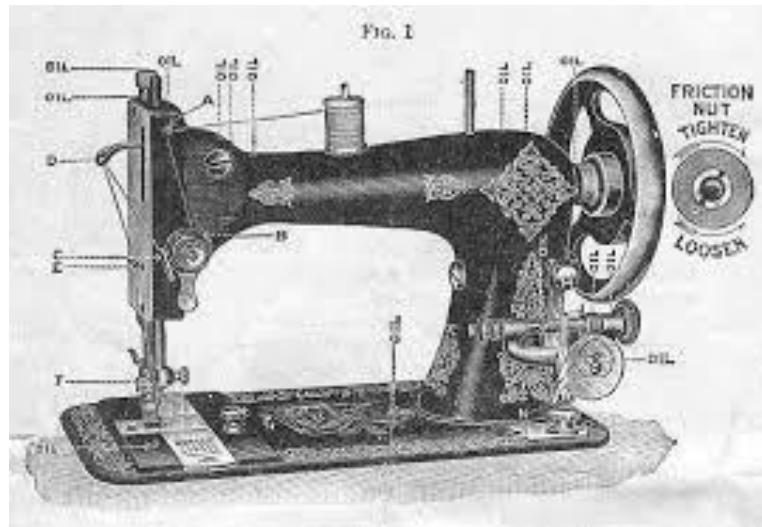
“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” So many problems would be solved if people would live by that simple rule. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it is the smart thing to do. When you do it—even when it's to your own hurt at first—it eventually comes back to you in the form of more love and other good things in your own life.

When you build your life and character on treating people the way you want to be treated, it's inevitable that they will return the favor by treating you with respect and kindness. But it starts with you. Do your part and start changing the world today.

I'm always inspired to hear about random acts of kindness. It's sad that instead of being the norm it is the unusual and inspiring. Nevertheless, I'm willing to try and make it my norm and after thinking about this quote, I've decided to take on the challenge of Mr. Willey. I am committing to making at least one person happy a day, and thus making the world a happier place. Want to join me in the challenge?



## Distract Your Mind



### Quote of the day:

"The mind ought sometimes to be diverted that it may return to better thinking." — Phaedrus

### Think about it:

Studies show that if you have a problem that you can't solve, if you give your mind a break the solution comes to you easily. In Elias Howe's case it came to him in a vision, but taking a walk or as the quote says, just diverting your thoughts works well too.

*Elias Howe, lived in the mid-1800's and is credited with inventing the sewing machine. One day, as he was working on the sewing machine project, he became particularly frustrated. He had been working with a regular sewing needle and had tried many different ways to mechanize it, with no success. He decided to take a break from his efforts and sat at the window of his workshop, gazing out in reverie.*

*He later told his wife what happened: As I wandered in my mind, a remarkable scene came to me. I was in a deep jungle and I was in a big, black pot with a roaring fire under it. I was being cooked alive! A warrior came at me with spear raised and ready to thrust. But what I noticed at that moment was something very curious about the spear: It had a hole in its tip.*

The pivotal discovery in the invention of the sewing machine is that the hole for the thread goes in the tip of the needle, not at its other end, as in a regular needle. This breakthrough had eluded the inventor in his conscious intellectual efforts, but came to him when he gave his mind a rest.

What problems are you wrestling with that your mind needs a diversion from?

## Meeting Events



### Quote of the day:

"I am more and more convinced that our happiness or our unhappiness depends far more on the way we meet the events of life than on the nature of those events themselves." — Karl Wilhelm Von Humboldt

### Think about it:

There's probably not a person on this planet who is completely satisfied with the way they are. We are either "too fat" or "too skinny," "too short" or "too tall," "too average," "too different," or "too" something. And what about those bad habits, weaknesses, and personality quirks that seem to stand in the way of our happiness, our success, and successful relations with others?

In time, most of us realize that one of the keys to happiness is learning to accept certain things about ourselves that we can't change or that don't really matter, and to major on the things that we can change and that do matter.

Someone wisely summed this up in what has come to be known as the Serenity Prayer: "Lord, give us serenity to accept what cannot be changed, courage to change what should be changed, and wisdom to distinguish the one from the other."

Are there things in your life you need the serenity to accept, the courage to change or the wisdom to know the difference?

## The Age Old Question



### Quote of the day:

“If we are to go forward, we must go back and rediscover those precious values—that all reality hinges on moral foundations, and that all reality has spiritual control.” — Martin Luther King Jr.

### Think about it:

What is truth? That age-old question is being asked less and less these days. Some people don't ask because they're so wrapped up in satisfying their material needs and desires that they never stop to consider their spiritual needs. Others don't ask because they're afraid they won't like the answer. And some don't ask because they don't believe that there is an answer; their inborn hunger for truth has been dulled by skepticism and the notion of “relative morality” that pervades modern thought.

But does the truth cease to exist because people don't seek it or don't want to acknowledge it? Do God and the spiritual realm cease to exist because so many choose not to believe? Of course not! The truth is the truth, and it's not contingent on anyone believing it. Even if no one believed, it would remain more real and enduring than the world you experience with your five senses.

## Crabs In a Bucket



### Quote of the day:

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great." — Mark Twain

### Think about it:

Some find themselves in a family, or circle of friends, that will pull them down if they strive to better themselves. They remind me of the story of the crabs.

*A single crab in a lidless bucket is bound to escape yet when more than one share a bucket, none can get out. If one crab elevates itself above all, the others will grab this crab and drag it back down to share the common fate of the rest.*

Take a lesson from the crabs and don't let others discourage you. Find people outside the bucket that will pull you up and out.

Select friends who stand above petty, unimportant things. Select friends who are interested in positive things, friends who really do want to see you succeed. Find friends who breathe encouragement into your plans and ideals.

## Expect Trouble



### Quote of the day:

“If I were asked to give what I consider the single most useful bit of advice for all humanity, it would be this: Expect trouble as an inevitable part of life, and when it comes, hold your head high. Look it squarely in the eye, and say, 'I will be bigger than you. You cannot defeat me.’” — Ann Landers

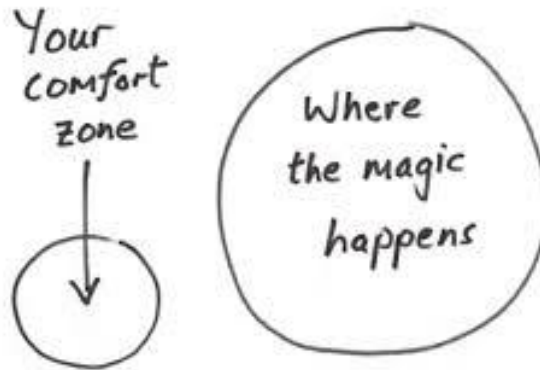
### Think about it:

The story of the oyster and the sand is a fitting illustration for this quote and one to remember when irritations come our way.

*An oyster opened wide its shell to let the water pass over it. As the water flushed through, its gills picked out food. Suddenly a large fish nearby stirred up a cloud of sand. Quickly the oyster slammed its shell, but one grain of sand had gotten in and lodged itself between his inner flesh and shell. Although that piece of sand was a bother the oyster’s special glands began working to coat the irritating grain of sand with a lovely smooth and shiny covering. Year after year the oyster added a few more layers of the coating onto the grain of sand until at last, it had produced a beautiful lustrous pearl of great value.*

Sometimes the problems we have are a bit like that grain of sand. They bother us and we wonder why we have the irritation and inconvenience they cause. But staying positive is like the coating inside the oyster’s shell, and can turn a seemingly bad situation into good. Do you find yourself in a difficult situation that you can turn into a pearl?

## Step Out Of Your Comfort Zone



### Quote of the day:

"Most of us die with our music unplayed. We should try to step out of our comfort zones and do the things we're capable of." — Mary Kay Ash

### Think about it:

Share your talent with the world. Don't die with your music unplayed like Mary Kay says.

*There was a man who played piano in a bar. He was a good piano player. People came out just to hear him play. But one night, a patron told him he didn't want to hear him just play anymore. He wanted him to sing a song.*

*The man said, "I don't sing." But the customer was persistent. He told the bartender, "I'm tired of listening to the piano. I want that guy to sing!"*

*The bartender shouted across the room, "Hey buddy! If you want to get paid, sing a song. The patrons are asking you to sing!"*

*So he did. He sang a song. A piano player who had never sung in public did so for the very first time. And nobody had ever heard the song Mona, Mona Lisa sung the way it was sung that night by Nat King Cole!*

He had talent he was sitting on! He may have lived the rest of his life as a no-name piano player in a no-name bar, but because he was pushed out of his comfort zone to sing, he went on to become one of the best-known entertainers in America.

You, too, have skills and abilities. You may not feel as if your 'talent' is particularly great, but it may be better than you think—and with persistence, most skills can be improved! Besides, you may as well have no ability at all if you sit on whatever talent you possess. The better question is not, "What ability do I have that is useful?" It is rather, "How will I use whatever ability I have?" Don't wait to be pushed out of your comfort zone, that may never happen, but do as Mary Kay says, STEP out of your comfort zone.



## The Lion and the Mouse



### Quote of the day:

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else.” — Charles Dickens

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of an Aesop fable that goes something like this.

*A sleeping lion was awakened when a mouse ran across his head. The lion roared and grabbed the tiny creature by the tail. “Please forgive me,” begged the mouse. “I meant no harm and I certainly did not intend to disturb you. If you could find it in your heart to let me go, I will return the favor someday.”*

*“I’m the king of the jungle and you’re just a little mouse,” the lion laughed. “What could you possibly do for me?” The lion looked at the frightened creature in his paw. “You would not be much of a meal anyway. I’ll let you go.”*

*The mouse thanked the lion and scurried away. A short while later, the mouse heard the distressed roar of the lion. Upon further investigation the mouse found the lion trapped in a hunter’s net. The lion struggled in vain to free himself, roaring in frustration.*

*“Shhh,” the mouse cautioned. “If you continue to roar, the hunters will know that you are trapped and they will come here and take you away. Don’t worry, I will help you escape.” The mouse began to gnaw on the net. In a matter of minutes, he freed the lion!*

*The lion looked at the mouse in awe. “I never imagined that a creature so tiny and meek could ever be of use to me. Yet, you alone have set me free. Please forgive me for misjudging your worth.”*

How many times do we misjudge other’s worth?

## Pay It Forward



### Quote of the day:

"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back." — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

A movie came out a few years ago entitled *Pay It Forward*. It is one of my favorites, and I try my best to live the principles portrayed in the film. Briefly the "pay it forward" rule is when you see someone in need, you are to help them without expecting anything in return. If asked or offered payment to reply "if you really want to pay me, the next time you see someone who needs help, give that person the assistance that they need without repayment."

The idea is that the world would be a better place if we see our blessings as a call to bless someone else, who, in turn, would bless someone else. If we all would take the step to pay it forward, it would cause a chain reaction of giving that would eventually circle the globe. A wonderful principle!

It's not always easy to follow through on this idea, but if you'll step out and try, you'll see, it sure makes life more exciting and worth living.

## Be a Love-Finder



Don't find fault.  
Find a remedy.

Henry Ford

### Quote of the day:

“Choose to be a love-finder rather than a fault-finder.” — Gerald Jampolsky

### Think about it:

*Alexander the Great, the world conqueror, wanted to have his portrait painted, and assigned the finest artist in the realm to the job. When the artist arrived in Alexander's court, he was told that the leader wanted a full-face pose. He was very sad, because Alexander's face was disfigured by a long, hideous scar on the right cheek—a memento from the battlefield.*

*The artist thought it over for awhile, then he discovered a way he could paint the portrait and at the same time hide the scar. He seated the leader at a table, placed his elbow on the table and asked Alexander to cup his chin in his hand. The artist then skillfully arranged Alexander's fingers in such a way that they hid the scar completely. And then he went on to paint a very beautiful and flawless portrait of his master.*

It is always best to minimize the weak points of others and emphasize their virtues. Is there anyone in your life you need to frame and look at in a different light?

## Progress Requires Change



### Quote of the day:

“Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change.” — Henry S. Commager

### Think about it:

We can learn a lot about coping with change from the classic musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. The story takes place at the beginning of the 20th century and features a Jewish family suffering from poverty and religious persecution in the south of Russia. The father, Tevye, complains about having five daughters and no sons, not the ideal distribution on a farm. To make matters worse, his three older daughters picked husbands he didn't approve of, one of them an goy. Throughout the story, whenever there is trouble or change in the air, a man playing a fiddle on a roof appears to him in a vision.

In the end, the family—and the entire Jewish community—is forced to leave their small town, during winter, with each family going to be with relatives in distant parts of the world. Tevye is forced to sell his old horse because of a bad hoof and has to push the wagon, containing his meager belongings, down the road himself, followed by his wife and two younger daughters. Then the fiddler appears again, playing his instruments cheerfully. At first, Tevye rejects the vision and almost curses it, but after a few moments, he lights up and begins to walk with renewed gusto to the rhythm of the fiddler's song.

The lessons of this movie transcend time and space. Changes are easier when we submit to them instead of resisting. Our lives are full of obstacles and sometimes persecutions. We face challenges and change in relationships, career, home life, with our health, looks, physical appearance, stamina, and so on.

How do you handle change—with resistance and complaint, or with gusto, walking to the rhythm of the fiddler?

## The Bus Driver



### Quote of the day:

"When the world feels cold and dark and lonely, take heart: Anybody can make their corner of it brighter." – Author Unknown

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of the following story told by Elizabeth Gilbert:

*Some years ago, I was stuck on a cross-town bus in New York City during rush hour. Traffic was barely moving. The bus was filled with cold, tired people who were deeply irritated with one another; with the rainy, sleety weather and with the world itself. Two men barked at each other about a shove that may or may not have been intentional. A pregnant woman got on, and nobody offered her a seat. Rage was in the air; no mercy would be found here.*

*As the bus approached Seventh Avenue, the driver got on the intercom. "Folks," he said, "I know you've had a rough day and you're frustrated. I can't do anything about the weather or traffic, but here's what I can do. As each one of you gets off the bus, I will reach out my hand to you. As you walk by, drop your troubles into the palm of my hand, okay? Don't take your problems home to your families tonight— just leave 'em here with me. My route goes right by the Hudson River, and when I drive by there later today, I'll open the window and throw your troubles in the water. Sound good?"*

*It was as if a spell had lifted. Everyone burst out laughing. Faces gleamed with surprised delight. People who'd been pretending for the past hour not to notice each other's existence were suddenly grinning at each other like, is this guy serious? Oh, he was serious. At the next stop—just as promised—the driver reached out his hand, palm up, and waited. One by one, all the exiting commuters placed their hand just above his and mimed the gesture of dropping something into his palm. Some people laughed as they did this, some teared up—but everyone did it. The driver repeated the same lovely ritual at the next stop, and the next—all the way to the river.*

What a great way to help others with their problems. We live in a hard world, my friends. Sometimes it's extra difficult to be a human being. Sometimes you have a bad day. Sometimes you have a bad day that lasts for several years. You struggle and fail. You lose jobs, money, friends, faith, and love. You witness horrible events unfolding in the news, and you become fearful and withdrawn. There are times when everything seems cloaked in darkness. You long for the light but don't know where to find it.

But what if you are the light? What if you are the very agent of illumination that a dark situation begs for? That's what this story and bus driver taught me—that anyone can be the light at any given moment. This man wasn't some big power player. He wasn't a spiritual leader. He wasn't a media-savvy "influencer." He was a bus driver—one of society's most invisible workers. But he possessed real power, and he used it beautifully for the benefit of others.

When life seems especially grim, or when I feel particularly powerless in the face of the world's troubles, I think of this man and ask myself, What can I do, right now, to be the light? Of course, I can't personally end all wars, or solve global warming, or transform vexing people into entirely different creatures.. But I do have some influence on everyone I brush up against, even if we never speak or learn each other's name. How we conduct ourselves matters because within human society everything is contagious—sadness and anger, yes, but also patience, kindness and generosity. We all have more influence than we realize. No matter who you are, or where you are, or how mundane or tough your situation may seem, I believe you can illuminate your part of this weary world.

## Learning From Others



### Quote of the day:

“I have never met a man so ignorant that I couldn't learn something from him.” — Galileo Galilei

### Think about it:

Everyone has at least one good quality or skill to pass on, and a wise person will look for that something. What some people have to offer is obvious, but with others it is more hidden and it must be drawn out.

Sometimes the learning experience doesn't center on some special skill or knowledge the other person has, but from simply being around that person and partaking of his or her good qualities, such as faith, patience, optimism, or outgoing love and concern for others.

You can even learn from some people about how not to behave, what not to do, and why not to follow in their footsteps. It's been said that a wise man learns from his mistakes, but a wiser man learns from the mistakes of others.

If you can learn to see people from the angle of “this person has something to offer that can help make me a better person,” you'll not only learn something, but you'll also be more likely to focus on things you respect in them and thereby build stronger and more meaningful relationships.



## Doing Right Or Wrong



### Quote of the day:

“Just as an oak tree grows from a little acorn so does great character grow from a great many decisions that may at the time seem very minor.” — Ben M. Herbster

### Think about it:

Every day, we are faced with hundreds, maybe even thousands, of decisions about doing either the right or the wrong thing. If you do a certain thing, you will get there before anybody else does. If you lie just a little bit, you can cut this corner. If you cheat just a little bit, you can pass this test. There always will be those temptations to take the shortcut, the easy path, instead of doing what is right and what is honorable.

The next time you are faced with a seeming little decision, but one that will determine what kind of character you have, think about this quote.

## Admire and Appreciate Others



### Quote of the day:

"Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own." — Johann von Goethe

### Think about it:

It takes time to notice the merits of others. This reminds me of a story.

*Once a wise old botany teacher was speaking to a group of young and eager students. He gave them an assignment to go out by the side of some lonely road and find a small, unnoticed flower.*

*He asked them to study the flower for a long time. "Get a magnifying glass and study the delicate veins in the leaves, and notice the nuances and shades of color. Turn the leaf slowly and observe its symmetry. And remember: this flower might have gone unnoticed and unappreciated if you had not found and admired it," he told his students.*

*When the class returned after carrying out the assignment, the wise teacher observed: "People are just like that unnoticed flower, too. Each one is different, carefully crafted, uniquely endowed. But you have to spend time with a person to realize this. So many people go unnoticed and unappreciated because no one has ever taken time with them and admired their uniqueness."*

Are you taking time to observe, admire and appreciate others? If so then you are a wise person. If not, why not start today.

## Leaving a Legacy



### Quote of the day:

"I don't want to have lived in vain like most people. I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death!" — Anne Frank

### Think about it:

This quote goes right along with the story behind the beautiful botanical garden in Kotkata, India.

*When walking into it you feel like you have been transported away from the hustle and bustle of the city and into a world of beauty with vibrant and vivid colors of the flowers and exotic plants. It turns out that the missionary William Carey started this institution—the oldest of its kind in India—in 1820, with a goal of helping the local people in a practical way.*

*He saw the local farmers using inferior seeds and ineffective farming techniques, and he wanted to improve their livelihoods and help them to realize, as he put it, "the capabilities of the soil to enrich a nation to an almost indefinite extent."*

*Carey's vision was a whole lot greater than just planting and exhibiting pretty flowers. He gathered near-extinct species of plants and nurtured them in the society's garden so they'd be preserved for the future. He also included maize, cotton, tea, sugar cane, and cinchona from various countries and introduced the concept of plantation farming to this part of India. He was successful in imparting this vision to others, and the society he created helped pioneer the introduction of a wide array of cereals, cash crops, fruits, vegetables, and other trees and plants.*

I am impressed by how Carey's legacy lives on almost two centuries after he had his initial idea. When he started this garden, it was a completely out-of-the-box concept and it is likely that he faced many challenges and much opposition, but he persevered.

What sort of legacy will you leave behind? Even small things can have a great impact on generations to come.

## Prepare for Opportunity



### Quote of the day:

“To be prepared is half the victory.” — Miguel de Cervantes

### Think about it:

In the days before modern harbors, a ship had to wait for the flood tide before it could make it to port. The term for this situation in Latin was *ob portu*, that is, a ship standing over against port, waiting for the moment when it could ride the turn of the tide to harbor. The English word opportunity is derived from this original meaning. The captain and the crew were ready and waiting for that one moment, for they knew that if they missed it, they would have to wait for another tide to come in.

*Shakespeare turned this background of the exact meaning of opportunity into one of his most famous passages:*

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life,  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat;  
And we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures.*

Are you prepared for the next opportunity that comes your way?

## Appreciating What You Have



### Quote of the day:

“We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.” — Frederick Keonig

### Think about it:

I read the below stats a while back and was reminded of it by the above quote.

*If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the millions who will not survive this week.*

*If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 900 million people in the world.*

*If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world.*

*If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.*

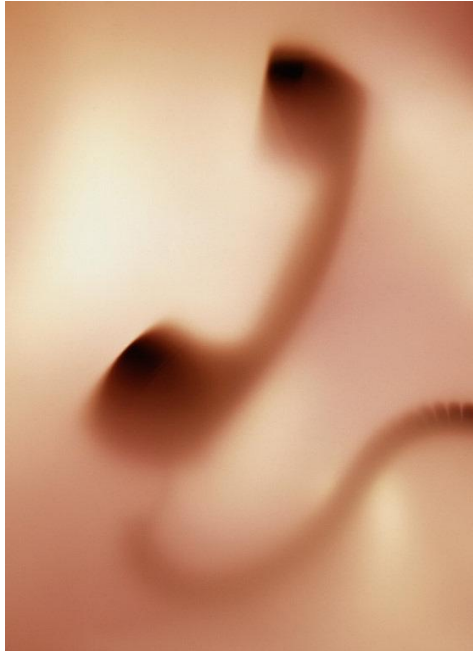
*If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.*

*If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.*

These stats certainly make me want to count my blessings. How about you?



## Remember You Must Die



### Quote of the day:

“The key to immortality is first living a life worth remembering.” — Bruce Lee

### Think about it:

There is a novel by Muriel Spark called *Memento Mori*. It tells about a group of friends, all over sixty-five, who one by one receive anonymous phone calls telling them, "Remember, you must die!"

The novel, partly serious, partly humorous, tells how different individuals come to terms with the telephone message. Though reactions vary, a common reaction is fear. Still, the anonymous caller often causes characters to think back over their lives and assess how they have lived, about the good they have done as well as the not-so-good. In a strange way, the message they receive about death forces them to come to terms with the meaning of the life they have lived. Somehow death leads them back into life.

Sometimes it's good to think about death so that you can live your life more fully. It can help bring into perspective the things that are truly important. Take time to reflect on your life thus far. Ask yourself if you need to make appropriate changes, so that your life will be one worth remembering.



## The Scarlet Letter



### Quote of the day:

“The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved--loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.” — Victor Hugo

### Think about it:

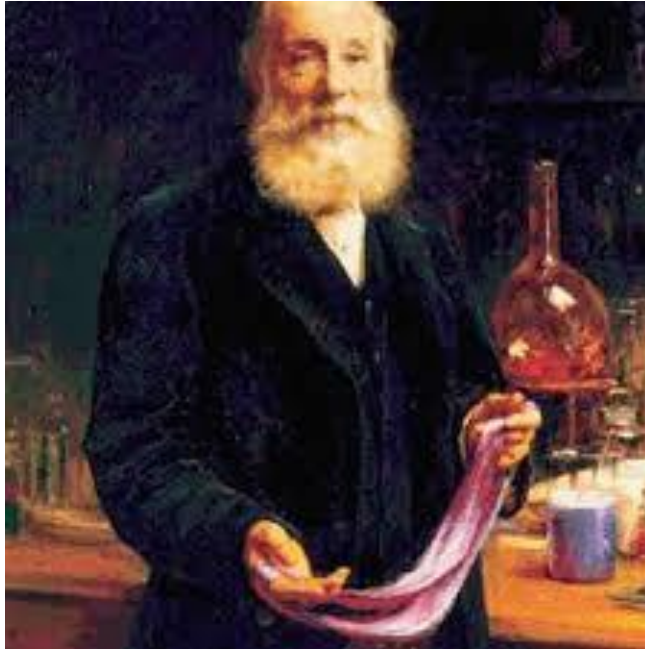
How we think is directly affected by the people we're around. This reminds me of the story behind how Nathaniel Hawthorne became a writer.

*It is told that the day Nathaniel Hawthorne lost his government position he was quite discouraged. On arriving home his wife learned the reason for his gloom, but instead of fretting and scolding him she set a pen and ink on the table, and, lit the fire and then put her arms about his shoulders and said, "Now you will be able to write your book." He took heart and became one of America's finest novelists.*

Good thing Mr. Hawthorne had a good support team in the form of his wife or he may never have written “The Scarlet Letter” among others. One of the ways to manage your thinking is to be sure you're amongst peers who think right. It's important to spend your time with people who stand above petty, unimportant things. Guard your psychological environment. If you are constantly around negative thinkers, you'll gradually become a negative thinker yourself and vice versa. If you are constantly around positive thinkers, you'll gradually become a positive thinker yourself.

If you haven't taken a close look at your personal environment in a while, then maybe it is time you should. Are your friends interested in positive things? Do they want to see you and others succeed? Do your friends exude encouragement and support? Do your close friends and those you hang out with have positive energy? Are they spiritually supportive? Do they refrain from speaking ill of you and others? Or are they negative and gossipy?

## Take a Close Look at Your Mistakes and Failures



### Quote of the day:

“Men succeed when they realize that their failures are the preparation for their victories.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

In 1856, 18-year-old chemist William Perkin turned out to be quite the young prodigy, inventing synthetic dye and going on to help fight cancer. Only, dye was nowhere close to what he intended on making. Here’s his story.

*Perkin was working on creating an artificial version of the malaria drug quinine. Instead, his experiments produced a dark oily sludge. Not only did the sludge turn silk a striking shade of light purple, it didn't wash out and was more vibrant and brighter than the existing dyes on the market. Up to that point, dyes were made mostly of insects, mollusks, or plant material.*

*As later chronicled in the book Mauve: How One Man Invented a Color That Changed the World, by Simon Garfield, Perkin's invention of mauve coloring became the hit of the Paris and London fashion scenes; Queen Victoria even wore it to her daughter's wedding in 1858.*

This story just goes to show that good can come out of seeming failure. Be sure to take a close look at your mistakes and failures and see if something better has not emerged.

## All Are Significant



### Quote of the day:

"No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude." — Alfred North Whitehead

### Think about it:

Someone sent me this story and I thought it had a great lesson.

*During my second month of nursing school, our professor gave us a pop-quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"*

*Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank.*

*Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. "Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello."*

*I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.*

I think that's a great story. The point being everyone is significant, even the seemingly insignificant people, and deserve our attention and care. You never know when they will be the ones to help you.

## What Do You Want Your Obituary To Say?



**Create an  
obituary**

### Quote of the day:

"It is never too late to be who you might have been." — George Eliot

### Think about it:

I thought this story was interesting, not only to see how one man changed his legacy, but the idea of writing your own obituary and then living your life to reflect it.

*About eighty years ago a man picked up the morning paper and, to his horror, read his own obituary! The newspaper had reported the death of the wrong man. Like most of us, he relished the idea of finding out what people would say about him after he died.*

*He read past the bold caption that stated, "Dynamite King Dies," to the text itself. He read along until he was taken aback by the description of him as a "merchant of death."*

*He was the inventor of dynamite, and he had amassed a great fortune from the manufacture of weapons of destruction. But he was moved by this description. Did he really want to be known as a "merchant of death"? It was at that moment that a healing power greater than the destructive force of dynamite came over him. It was his hour of conversion. From that point on, he devoted his energy and money to works of peace and human betterment. Today, of course, he is best remembered not as a "merchant of death," but as the founder of the Nobel Peace Prize-Alfred Nobel.*

What do you want your obituary to say? Start working on it today.

## Log Jam



### Quote of the day:

“Your thoughts are the architects of your destiny.” — David O. McKay

### Think about it:

We are the sum of our thoughts. We cannot for any length of time behave in a way that is inconsistent with our thinking. You will not be able to change your attitude for the better unless you know what is currently impacting it for the worse.

*When professional loggers are floating logs down a river and they discover a log-jam, they climb up a large tree near the river so that they can look over the problem and find the cause. What they're looking for is the key log that is creating the problem. Once they remove that, the river takes care of the rest. An inexperienced person could spend hours, days, even weeks moving around logs without results.*

Similarly, if these words are speaking to your heart, why not step back and find the negative thoughts or values that are jamming up your life. You don't necessarily need to change all of your thinking—just the few items that are keeping a positive attitude from flowing in you. Pin-point what is jamming things up and then take measures to change that and your life should start flowing again.

## Don't Give It One More Second of Your Life



### Quote of the day:

"Forgiveness doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls our lives." – Author unknown

### Think about it:

I think this is a beautiful story on forgiveness.

*A woman in Florida was raped, shot in the head by her attacker and left for dead. She survived, but she was blind and mutilated.*

*She later appeared on a television talk show. The interviewer remarked, "You must have a lot of resentment and hatred toward the man who did this!"*

*She replied, "No, I gave that man one night of my life, and I'm not going to give him a second more!"*

Of course, you can cling to your grudge if you want to. But when you do, you use your strength for this day making yourself and the people around you feel miserable and guilty. Or, you can cut the line to what is behind you through the power of forgiveness and use your strength to pull you toward what lies ahead.



## Bruce Diaso Memorial Challenge



### Quote of the day:

"Gratitude is the sign of noble souls." — Aesop

### Think about it:

Most people have no idea how often they complain. The reason is that we live in a culture of complaint. It's going on all around us all the time. Why is it we complain, when we have so much to be thankful for?

I decided to put myself to the test in the complaint department. I took up the Bruce Diaso Memorial Challenge, which entails of going the next twenty-four hours without complaining about one single thing—starting now!

The story behind this challenge is as follows:

*Bruce was paralyzed by polio when he was a senior in high school. When he arrived at university, he was in a wheelchair. The only parts of his body he could move were his hands (but not his arms) and his head. Inside that head was a great brain and inside his heart was a greater disposition. No one ever heard Bruce complain. His friends were in awe of how upbeat he was.*

*One day he was asked how he managed to be so positive all the time. His answer was simple, wise, and profound. He said, "I didn't want to live the rest of my life feeling sorry for myself or being angry, so I decided to be thankful instead."*

*Bruce graduated with high honors. He earned a scholarship to law school, and went on to a successful career as an attorney. Sadly, he died when he was only thirty-one. But Bruce left a great legacy behind because he touched the lives of everyone who met him. He'll be remembered for a lot of reasons. One, is that he was the most thankful person you could ever know. He taught others to focus on the good in life and to be thankful for it. No one ever heard Bruce complain about anything.*

After taking up the challenge for 24 hours I was astonished how much I complain, especially as I like to think of myself as being a positive person. It seems I am good company as out of sixteen thousand people who took up the challenge only five were able to complete it successfully. Needless to say, it has given me something to work on.

Why not take up the challenge and see how much you complain?

## Spirit of Approval



### Quote of the day:

"I have yet to find the man, however exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than under a spirit of criticism." — Charles M Schwab

### Think about it:

There are many examples in history of people who did amazing things, in great part due to the faith that someone had in them. That strength of faith and the belief that others had in them helped many of these notable people to overcome what seemed to be impossible odds, opposition, danger, or difficulty. They might have ended up unheard of by the rest of the world if they hadn't been inspired to achieve, and as a result of that, pressed on to become more than they were.

One such example is Robert Fulton's mother.

*Robert was a poor pupil at school and the teacher complained to his mother. Whereupon Mrs. Fulton replied proudly: "My boy's head, sir, is so full of original notions that there is no vacant chamber in which to store the contents of your musty books."*

*"I was only ten years old at that time," said Fulton, "and my mother seemed to be the only human being who understood my natural bent for mechanics. She developed my early talent for drawing, and encouraged me in my visits to the machine-shops of the town."*

Robert Fulton was widely credited with developing the first commercially successful steamboat as well as the first working submarine.

What are you doing to encourage others to succeed?

## Symphony of Life



### Quote of the day:

“When God made you, he threw away the mold. There never has been or ever will be another person like you.” — Robert F. Kennedy

### Think about it:

*The well known Chinese conductor stood with his arms raised before his orchestra, ready to begin the final rehearsal before the year's most important musical event. He lowered his baton, and the huge hall was filled with the glorious strains of the organ, the mighty echo of the drums, the clash of cymbals and the haunting melancholy of the stringed instruments. To the few people who were privileged to watch the rehearsal, the orchestra had never sounded better.*

*Suddenly, the conductor thundered "Stop!" There was an astonished silence. Then he demanded: "Where is the piccolo?"*

*The piccolo player had kept silent because he thought the absence of his small instrument would go unnoticed, but the trained ear of the conductor had missed the delicate tones of the little instrument because the music was incomplete and imperfect without it.*

Some of us may not have many or great talents, but each of us has a role to play. Have you become a silent onlooker thinking that your contribution is not worthwhile? Let's get back in the symphony of life. We need you.

## Corrie ten Boom



### Quote of the day:

"The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration, but its donation." — Corrie ten Boom

### Think about it:

Corrie ten Boom's story is a triumphant one. A young Christian woman imprisoned by the Nazi's in WW II for helping Jew's to escape. Corrie was put in a concentration camp and endured extreme cruel conditions that would have killed most people, yet in the midst of that great adversity something clicked within her spirit which caused her to shine with brilliant love to pour out comfort and hope to her fellow prisoners.

Years later when released, Corrie's life blossomed even further in a continual ministry of reconciliation and healing post WW II. She gave above and beyond to others during her life on earth, even through the worst circumstances.

Do you spend more time thinking about how you can get more for yourself than you do thinking about what you can do for others? Try taking 10 minutes today and write down five ways in which you can give to help enrich others lives and bring them hope. Remember, your giving needn't be through giving material things alone, it could be through little acts of love and kindness that go a long way to make someone's day.

## Criticism



### Quote of the day:

“In the face of unjust criticism we can become bitter or better; upset or understanding; hostile or humble; furious or forgiving.” — William Arthur Ward

### Think about it:

*A story is told of a young woman who wanted to become a prima ballerina. She studied diligently for many years, until she finally had the opportunity to audition for the ballet master. Her performance was faultless and superb. After the audition the master barely looked up at her and remarked simply that she wouldn't be accepted, she had no talent to become a ballerina. Crushed, the young lady gave up her dream.*

*Years later she happened to attend a ballet where she again met the old master. She went up to ask him how he could have known she would never make a great ballerina.*

*The old man didn't recognize her, but he paused a moment and said, “My dear that's what I tell all the ballerinas who audition for me.”*

Ask yourself—is a word of criticism from another stopping you from making progress towards your dream? Remember, your success is not so much determined by another's criticisms but by your own perseverance.

## Burnt Biscuits



### Quote of the day:

"You will find, as you look back upon your life, that the moments when you really lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love." — Henry Drummond

### Think about it:

Someone sent me this story which reflects a wonderful lesson about gratitude and appreciation.

*When I was a kid, my mom liked to make breakfast food for dinner every now and then. And I remember one night in particular when she had made breakfast after a long, hard day at work. On that evening so long ago, my mom placed a plate of eggs, sausage and extremely burned biscuits in front of my dad. I remember waiting to see if anyone noticed! Yet all my dad did was reach for his biscuit, smile at my mom and ask me how my day was at school. I don't remember what I told him that night, but I do remember watching him smear butter and jelly on that biscuit and eat every bite!*

*When I got up from the table that evening, I remember hearing my mom apologize to my dad for burning the biscuits. And I'll never forget what he said: "Honey, I love burned biscuits."*

*Later that night, I went to kiss Daddy good night and I asked him if he really liked his biscuits burned.*

*He wrapped me in his arms and said, "Your Momma put in a hard day at work today and she's real tired. And besides - a little burnt biscuit never hurt anyone!"*

Life is full of imperfect things and imperfect people. Learning to accept each other's faults, and choosing to celebrate each other's differences, is one of the most important keys to creating healthy, growing, and lasting relationships.



## A Grain of Sand



### Quote of the day:

“It is the wounded oyster that mends its shell with pearl.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson.

### Think about it:

Did you know that when an oyster gets a grain of sand in its shell and can't get it out it secretes a substance that covers it. Year after year the oyster adds more layers to cover its irritation, until at last it has produced a beautiful, lustrous pearl of great value.

Our problems are like that grain of sand. They bother us, and sometimes we wonder why we have to suffer the irritation and inconvenience they can be. Like the oyster we can turn our wounds and adversities into precious pearls of inner strength that will become an inspiration to others. For years pearls have been used as a metaphor for something very rare, fine, admirable, and valuable—and so they are, but it takes a little “sand” to make them so.

Life is all about the little decisions you make every day. Decisions of the past have had their effect, but every new day can be a new start. No matter what has happened up until now, you have a chance to make the right decisions today.

Don't waste time reliving the pain of past mistakes and wrong decisions. That only saps your power to do what you can do today. You can't change the past, but the future is what you make it, starting right now, so take full advantage of the present.

What wounds in your life do you need to mend and turn into pearls?

## Relationships



### Quote of the day:

"A man without ambition is dead. A man with ambition but no love is dead. A man with ambition and love for his blessings here on earth is ever so alive." — Pearl Bailey

### Think about it:

Often we act as if relationships are something to be squeezed into our schedule. We talk about finding time for our children or making time for people in our lives. That gives the impression that relationships are just a routine part of our lives along with many other things on our long to-do lists. But relationships are one of the things life is all about.

Relationships, not achievements or the gaining of things, are what matters most in life. So why do we allow our relationships to get the short end of the stick? When our schedules become overloaded, we start skimming relationally, cutting back on giving the time, energy, and attention that loving relationships require. What's most important is displaced by what's urgent. Busyness is a great enemy of cultivating good relationships. We become preoccupied with making a living, doing our work, paying bills, and accomplishing goals as if these tasks are the main point of life. They are not. The most important point of life is learning to love people.

Are you letting your relationships get the short end of the stick? If so what can you do today to turn that around?

## Wanting To Do Right



### Quote of the day:

"The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he never would be found out." — Thomas Babington Macaulay

### Think about it:

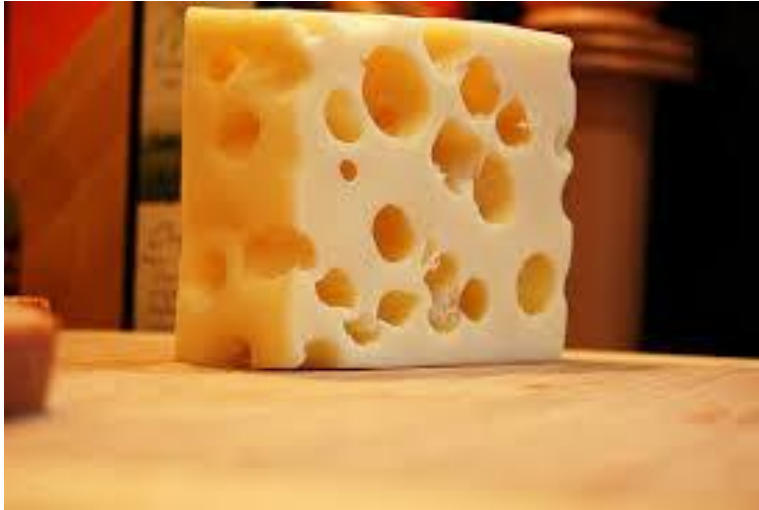
This quote reminds me of a story about a pastor who was boarding a bus.

*The pastor paid his fare to the driver, who gave him too much change, so he promptly went back to the driver and said, "Excuse me, sir. You gave me back too much change."*

*The driver replied, "No, Pastor, I didn't give you too much change. I was at your church yesterday. You preached on honesty, so I just thought I would put you to the test."*

There are a lot of tests in life to see if we have integrity and character. Integrity comes in where the fear of being caught leaves off. Fear is a fine deterrent, and it has its place. But a far better motive is wanting to do what is right.

## Procrastination



### Quote of the day:

“Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs.” — Henry Ford

### Think about it:

Henry Ford ought to know, as it was on this idea that the automobile assembly line was born. Large successes are usually a series of small ones. So I tend to agree with Henry’s statement, and in fact, I have used what I call the “Swiss Cheese Method” for many years when I find I am having a hard time getting started on an important project.

First I break down the project into small tasks. Then I poke holes in the project by doing the easier, the more interesting, or the tasks that will take five minutes or less to start. I have found that usually once I get started it gives me the desire to keep going. After I have made a few holes in a big job, I find it’s much easier to finish than I had originally thought.

Are you putting off or procrastinating on any projects that you could apply the “Swiss Cheese Method” to?

## One Step At A Time



### Quote of the day

“The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.” — Chinese proverb

### Think about it:

*A teacher took her primary school students to the assembly hall for a lesson with a difference. Standing at the foot of the steps leading up to the stage, she asked, “Is anybody good at jumping?” Quite a few young hands shot up.*

*“Well,” she continued, “could any of you jump from the floor here up onto the stage?” No hands went up this time.*

*“I can,” said the teacher, “and I’ll show you how.”*

*Beginning at the foot of the steps leading up to the stage, she hopped onto the first step. From there she hopped onto the second, and so on until she reached the top.*

Don’t let circumstances defeat you. Many things can only be accomplished little-by-little, and step-by-step. If you find yourself facing a daunting task, and the way ahead looks too steep to climb, just take it one step at a time.

## Be a World Changer



### Quote of the day:

“Remember, there’s no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple.” — Scott Adams

### Think about it:

In my writings, I often speak about making a difference and helping others. I encourage you to do more for others, but I don’t often give practical examples. Today I share one such example with you—an excerpt from Anna Perlini, co-founder of Per un Mondo Migliore, a humanitarian organization in the Balkans. This is an illustration of an alternative lifestyle choice to escape the frustrations of our greed base society.

*Ivan and Francesca often expressed their frustration in trying to adjust to a society that was losing its values. They wished they could adopt a different lifestyle, but didn’t know how. Then, on one of my more recent visits, it was immediately obvious that something was very different. For one thing, their dining room had extra tables, which quickly filled with what seemed like a river of lively children from the neighborhood. Ivan was busy serving and introduced me to Claudio and Manuela, another couple who not only lived in their small town, but also shared a similar vision.*

*Later on, I got to know other families who were also part of a network called Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (Ethical Purchasing Groups). The aim is to cooperate in order to buy food and other commonly used goods directly from producers or retailers at discounted rates, while also emphasizing the use of local and fair-trade produce, and reusable or eco-compatible goods. Ivan and Francesca (and their now three children) were some of the founders of the local branch, and needless to say, they always found a way to direct some love and attention to their “neighbor near or far.”*

*“If we want a message of love to get to others, we need to send it. If we want a lamp to keep burning, we need to keep feeding it oil.” As time passes, it’s clear that what was once an experiment has grown into a tried-and-proven alternative life choice.*

I’m not suggesting that we all start Ethical Purchasing Groups but it is good food for thought—how one couple changed their little part of the world for the better.



## Care For The Happiness Of Others



### Quote of the day:

“The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being.” — Dalai Lama

### Think about it:

Life constantly presents us with opportunities to take an extra step or do a kind deed that will make a difference in someone's life. The wonderful thing is that as we do, it changes things for the better for us, too. Like a boomerang, the blessing comes back to us. This story by Lilia Potters illustrates this principle.

*The weather had been dark and rainy, and I felt just as gloomy. As I sat at my desk, I remembered it was the birthday of a longtime friend--a single, middle-aged woman who had dedicated the past 30 years to nursing. Knowing that she didn't have family in town, I decided to give her a call. Sure enough she was scheduled to work late into the evening, and wouldn't have much of a birthday this year. As always, though, she sounded cheerful and was happy I had called. After I hung up, I couldn't shake the feeling that she would really appreciate a little special attention on her birthday. That evening I set off to the hospital with a card, a slice of cheesecake, and a “flower” sculpted from balloons. My friend's grateful smile and joyful exclamations assured me I had done the right thing and was a generous reward for the little effort it had taken me. When I got home, I realized that I had not only cheered up a lonely friend on her birthday, but I had caused my own gloom to dissipate in the process. Making her day had made my own.*

Isn't that the way it is when we take the time and make the effort to do something for someone else? It's like the little saying, “Loving-kindness is twice blessed; it blesses him who gives, and him who receives.”

## Happiness



### Quote of the Day:

“The more [money] a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one.” — Benjamin Franklin

### Think about it:

The following story illustrates this quote.

*The English millionaire Jon Pedley had great dreams that he had managed to fulfill. Money, fame, respect—he had it all. He’d even been featured on magazine covers. But it turned out he was struggling.*

*Somewhere past the façade, there was a nagging little voice that told him that all was not as it seemed to be, that there was more to life than just wealth. He hated that voice and tried to drown it out with alcohol. One day he drank too much and had a car crash. He ended up in a coma for six weeks. But that wasn’t the end. When he finally woke up, he’d had enough.*

*He realized he needed to change. And change he did! He gave his heart to God and most of his money to charity. Then he flew to Uganda, lived in a mud hut among the poor, and started an orphanage for lost children.*

Not everyone is called to sell all their worldly belongings and live in primitive conditions, but Jon Pedley’s story is a good illustration of how true lasting happiness isn’t found in accumulating money and possessions.

## Don't Sabotage Your Success



### Quote of the day:

"We become what we think about all day long." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

Limiting beliefs are one of the things that stop us from taking risks. It's thoughts like "I don't have enough money" or "I don't have enough time" or "I don't have the right education or background," "I'm not good enough," therefore "I can't take a risk of having what I want." Your limiting beliefs are thoughts about how you are lacking something or how you are limited by something. Limiting beliefs cause us to mistakenly believe that it is safer to hide out, quit trying, play it safe, avoid risk and therefore avoid failure.

When you are listening to and acting on limiting beliefs you sabotage your own success. I don't know about you, but I have allowed this to happen to me too often in my life. Remember your negative opinions are not the truth. They are only opinions. Instead believe you can have anything you want, and you can have it.

There is a strong connection between thinking the right thoughts and doing the right things. Positive thoughts are not enough. They must become action. They must translate into positive deeds. As you combine your new thought patterns and reactions with behavior that reflect the change, you will go from strength to strength.

You'll not only be entertaining positive thoughts, but by *acting* on those thoughts, what you weren't able to do before will become possible. As you live your positive thoughts day by day, you'll see them manifested more and more in your actions, reactions and daily life.

## Never Accept Defeat



### Quote of the day:

“I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life; I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well.” —Theodore Roosevelt

### Think about it:

I read this adapted article by Marie Boisjoly in the *Motivated* magazine that I thought was very inspiring.

*I'm an avid reader, and I always keep some uplifting reading material on my bedside table. One of my favorites is a collection of short biographies and quotes from great men and women—not that I aspire to such greatness, but I find their examples a source of strength to meet life's daily challenges.*

*What made these people great? Some of the qualities most often cited by both historians and their peers were their foresight, moral character, selflessness, and perseverance in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. I'm sure that each of those great men and women had other intangibles, but for one man in particular it was his faith and tenacity. His name was William Wilberforce (1759-1833).*

*During his 18-year parliamentary campaign to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire, his first 11 bills were defeated. At times, the political hostility against him erupted into personal hatred, insult, slander, and even a threat on his life by a sea captain involved in the slave trade. But he never accepted defeat.*

*Biographers may not agree on every detail of his experience, but all credit his faith with fueling his fire. All the while, he also contended with debilitating health problems. His eyesight was so bad that he once wrote, “I can scarce see how to direct my pen.” Bedridden for weeks at a time, he also suffered from curvature of the spine (one writer of his day likened him to a “human corkscrew,” and he wore an iron corset for 15 years), an ulcerated colon, and a severe bout of influenza from which he never fully recovered. And of course medicine 200 years ago was not what it is today. At one point Wilberforce became addicted to the latest “wonder drug,” opium. Had Wilberforce given up his fight, others would have quickly excused him for health reasons, if nothing else. But he was looking for change, not excuses.*

*The Slave Trade Act was passed into law in 1807, and in 1833, three days before he died, he received word that enough votes had been secured to ensure passage of the Slavery Abolition Act, and the emancipation of slaves.*

William Wilberforce, didn't give up what he believed in and felt was right, in spite of his weaknesses and the bill not being passed 11 times. He kept at it and finally the bill did get passed. Wow! What perseverance in the face of adversity. Are you persevering in spite of obstacles?

## Coinage of Character



### Quote of the day:

“Happiness does not depend on outward things, but on the way we see them.” — Leo Tolstoy

### Think about it:

Trials, troubles, and adversity are not always easy to go through. I find if I just look at them from a different perspective it helps. For example:

*Imagine walking through a large jewelry store and marveling at the many delicate-looking and exquisitely jeweled pieces before you. Within each glass case is displayed a dazzling array of precious stones and metals, designed, cut, and set to perfection: rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and more. You name it, this store has it all.*

*In your hand you hold several of what to you look like dirty old coins. Your eyes then widen as the clerk opens a glass case and selects a very beautiful, very costly necklace that you've been admiring. He boxes it, puts it in your hand with a smile, and tells you that it's yours in exchange for one of these dirty little coins. What's more, he tells you to come back again tomorrow and he'll trade another treasure for one of these coins.*

The “dazzling array of precious stones” that you see before you are the priceless depth of character, integrity, values and beliefs that those seemingly dirty and almost repulsive coins—the many battles, tests, and trials you are facing right now—are able to purchase. This is how you get them: through trying times of trials, affliction, and hardships. These are the currency that buy the jewels that beautify your life.



## Falling Forward



### Quote of the day:

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." — Confucius

### Think about it:

This story is short, but has a powerful lesson.

*A story is told of an elderly woman who slipped and fell on a busy street. Several people quickly went to assist her, but she was already hoisting herself back up.*

*"I'm all right," she assured them. "I always fall forwards, never backwards."*

How many times in life have we lost our footing and taken a fall? How many times have we lain there questioning whether we had the strength or will to get up and try again? Each time we make the choice to not give up, we find strength to carry on. Failure, disappointments, and setbacks are all part of life, but we can refuse to allow them to get the best of us. When we've "taken a fall," instead of dwelling on the mistake or hurt, let's make it a fall forward by learning from it and looking to the future.



## Be Your Best Self



### Quote of the day:

“Living well, becoming the best person one can possibly be, is the only success worth thinking about.” — Fredelle Maynard

### Think about it:

Fridelle Maynard went on to say, “It’s often said that winning is better than losing, success is infinitely preferable to failure. But when the emphasis is on winning, [we] become overcautious, fearful of making mistakes. When the emphasis is on competition, winner skills develop at the expense of empathy, cooperation, compromise—life arts essential to human success.”

“Perhaps the most devastating effect of the success ethic is what [we] come to believe about [our self]--that [we are] valued for what [we] can produce or achieve, rather than for who [we are]. Can it be, [we] may well wonder that being loved depends on winning?”

It would behoove us to fight against the mind-set that we are loved for what we do instead of for who we are. Instead let’s strive for being the best person we can be and doing the best we can do at whatever we are doing and living well, and then we’ll be true winners and will find true success. Like Thomas Edison said, “Your worth consists in what you are and not in what you have [done].”

Be the best person you can possibly be. Remember you are one of a kind.

## Stop Looking For Imperfection



### Quote of the day:

"If you look for perfection, you'll never be content." — Leo Tolstoy

### Think about it:

Have you ever been frustrated by the imperfections of others and wished that things could just be perfect? Did you ever wonder why do things like personality clashes, carelessness, inconsideration, injustice, pessimism, and put-downs have to exist? These things are real, and they are wrong! I wish they did not exist. If everyone, myself included, could just get their act together, our lives could be one of blissful perfection. Perfection, I often reason, is the only thing that can ever relieve my irritations.

Boy, has my thinking been wrong. What we really need is more love and tolerance. As I ponder more about the lack of perfection in others as well as myself, I realize how much we'd be missing if I and everyone around me were perfect from the start. We'd miss the unpredictability of life that adds a sense of surprise; the joy of forgiving and being forgiven; the strong, abiding bonds of friendship that are formed through adversity, and positive character traits that are formed much the same way.

So, what to do? I have decided to stop looking for *perfection* as Mr. Tolstoy suggests. Adding negative thoughts to a negative situation never brings positive results. I have determined to look for, and find, positive opportunities and experiences in every situation, even those that are hidden behind a mask of imperfection. If we look beyond difficulties, losses, hurts, and lacks, in the day-to-day circumstances we encounter, our journey through life will be joyous and filled with surprise. Instead we can think of each imperfect experience as a clue in a treasure hunt, the door to a secret vault where we will find beautiful treasures.

Look for and list the hidden treasures in both people and situations that irritate you, and soon you will realize what a jewel they are.

## Find the Magic



### Quote of the day:

“I have always been delighted at the prospect of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning.” — J. B. Priestly

### Think about it:

It is important that you set your mind and spirit on the right track before you face the day. If you start your day rushed, hurried, angry, irritated, or in any other negative mindset, then most likely your whole day will be the same, but the contrary is just as true. If you start your day with gratitude, positiveness and inspiration, then most likely that is how your day will go.

Taking time first thing in the morning in reflection and meditation will give you power and strength of spirit. Consistently taking this time will help you gain wisdom and love to share with others. Without this strength of spirit you limit yourself to your own little world and meager resources. Your human strength is apt to run out before the day has scarcely started, your own thoughts can get in the way. But when you get alone in quiet meditation, you open boundless new possibilities.

It seems easier to carry on in your own energy than to work at being quiet where you can receive inner strength, but that's not so; you really make it harder for yourself when you try to go along in your own strength.

Do yourself a favor, take a little time each morning to quiet yourself, as you practice, it will become easier and see if you won't gain strength for the day. Make it part of your morning routine and as you stick to it, it will become easier, and you will come out better for it in the end.

## Calculated Risks



### Quote of the day:

“Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.” — General George S. Patton

### Think about it:

There is a fine balance between acting too quickly and waiting too long. It is important to carefully make a decision by gathering all the facts available, and then make an informed decision, but once made, swift action should be taken.

*Titus, the emperor of Rome understood this principle. His symbol was the image of a dolphin wound around an anchor, which was inscribed on coins during his reign.*

*The anchor represented delay and unchanging conviction. The dolphin was regarded as the swiftest and most mercurial creature of the sea. Together they symbolized the failure that comes from rushing into something, and the failure that is the result of hesitation or undue caution.*

*Through the years, the dolphin and the anchor have been used as his family crest, with the explanatory motto *Festina Lente*, "Hasten Slowly." It expresses moderation between two opposing ideas. It means the medium between acting too quickly and waiting too long.*

As I see it what the quote and story is saying is we should take time to carefully ascertain the pros and cons of a decision but once a decision is made, action should be taken or as Patton puts it take calculated risks.

## Flaunt It



### Quote of the day:

“If you are not happy with your life, you can change it in two ways: either improve the conditions in which you live, or improve your inner spiritual state. The first is not always possible, but the second is.” — Leo Tolstoy

### Think about it:

Limiting beliefs can often hold us back from living up to our full potential.

*Cass Daley wanted to be a singer, but she was very self-conscious because of her large mouth and buck teeth. When she began singing in nightclubs as a teenager, she tried to hide her buck teeth behind a down-stretched upper lip. The result was that she made herself look ridiculous. One night, a man heard her sing, recognized her exceptional talent, and wasn't too shy to tell her the truth.*

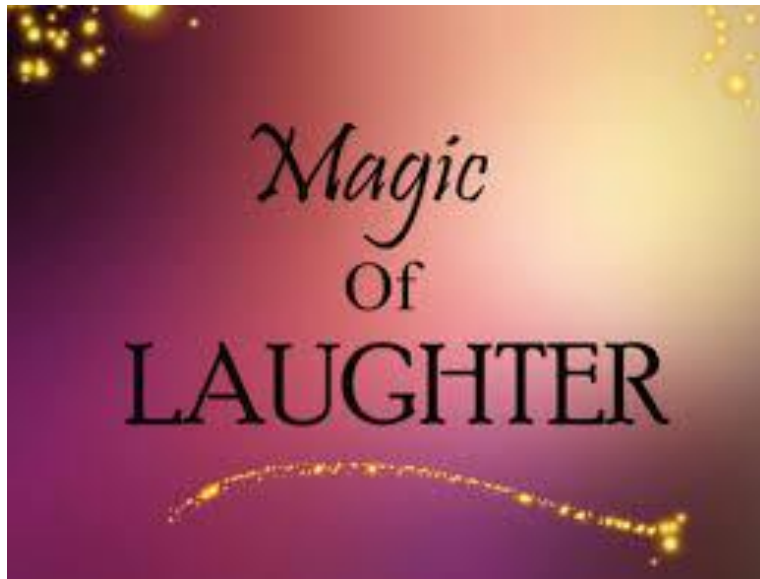
*“See here,” he said to her bluntly, “I've been watching your performance and I know what it is you're trying to hide. You're ashamed of your teeth.” Cass was embarrassed, but the man continued, “What of it? Is there any crime in having buck teeth? Don't try to hide them. Flaunt them! The audience will love you when they see that you're not ashamed. Besides, those teeth you're trying to hide may make your fortune.”*

*Cass Daley took his advice. From that time on, she opened her mouth wide and sang with such gusto and enjoyment that she became not only a successful singer, but also a film actress and comedienne.*

Limiting beliefs can stop us from living up to our full potential. It often causes us to worry about what other people might say or think about us, especially if we've heard it before or think it ourselves. Maybe we think we're too tall or too short, or too fat or too thin, or ugly, or whatever. That was Cass Daley's problem. She wanted to be a singer, but she was very self-conscious because of her large mouth and buck teeth. When we stop worrying about all the things we think others would like us to be, and instead are content with the way God made us, then we will stop worrying so much about the opinions of others. This will set us free to live up to our full potential.

Is there a limiting belief that is stopping you from living up to your full potential?

## Laughter



### Quote of the day:

"Laughter is the most healthful exertion." — Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland

### Think about it:

I've been reading about the benefits of laughter and my findings are quite amazing. As Solomon wrote in the book of Proverbs so many years ago, "A merry heart does good, like medicine." He didn't have scientific studies to back him up, but he sure did hit the nail on the head.

Jennifer Welsh wrote an article in LiveScience, "Why Laughter May Be the Best Pain Medicine," *Scientific American*, September 14, 2011. Melanie Winderlich wrote "10 Reasons Why Laughing Is Good for You," in *Curiosity (Discovery Channel)*. Both articles highlight how sharing laughter and fun can foster empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy with others. In addition, laughter has been shown in many cases to:

- Decrease stress
- Alleviate pain
- Reduce aggression
- Boost your immune system
- Boost your social skills
- Impact blood sugar levels
- Exercise many muscles in your body
- Enhance your coping skills

With all these benefits it behooves us to laugh more. Have you had a good laugh today?



## Be Important To A Child



### Quote of the day:

“A hundred years from now, it won't matter what your bank account was, the sort of house you lived in, or the kind of car you drove, but the world may be different because you were important in the life of a child.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

I read this article from the Activated magazine written by Rosane Pereira. It so impressed me that I wanted to share it with you.

*I recently took my teenage son to an ecotourism project in the big Complexo do Alemão group of favelas [slums] in northern Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. There are cable gondolas that stop on all five mountaintops, from where we could see the entire bay and all the beautiful mountain ranges. Dotted the mountains, there are also thousands of small huts lacking decent roofs and with bare and unpainted brick walls. Those were the favelas.*

*At one point, my son commented: “It’s amazing how many more poor people there are than rich!”*

*On our way back down, we talked with a missionary who had begun working there before peace had been achieved, at the time when the police and drug cartels had been engaged in daily gun battles. Another woman described how she used to have to walk to the fountain to get water every day when she was younger, until her father and others had been able to dig a community well. Life in the area has improved significantly in the past few years, but the stories these women shared were a reminder of the dire conditions so many people live in.*

*This excursion had quite an impact on my son, who is now showing more interest in helping destitute families in our city rather than being primarily concerned with having his own wants met.*

Children can develop compassion for others through participating in services for the community, scout groups, or helping the less fortunate, and if they have been taught these values from an early age, they will be more likely to hold on to them for the rest of their lives.

Even if you don't have any children of your own we can all influence the children we come in contact with for good. Take some time to think of ways you can contribute to the next generation's development even if it's only by sponsoring worthy character building programs.

## Know Thy Self



### Quote of the Day:

"Don't be too hard on yourself. There are plenty of people willing to do that for you. Love yourself and be proud of everything that you do. Even mistakes mean you're trying." — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Have you ever asked yourself, "What is my greatest weakness?" Probably the greatest human weakness is self-depreciation, that is, selling oneself short. Self-depreciation manifests in countless ways.

For example, John sees a job advertisement in the paper. It is exactly what he would like, but he does nothing about it because he thinks, "I'm not good enough for that job, so why bother?" Or Joan would like to have a date with Jim, but she doesn't make herself available because she thinks she is not pretty enough.

For thousands of years philosophers have given this good advice: "Know thyself." Yet most people, it seems, interpret these wise words to mean "know only thy negative self." Most self-evaluation consists of making long mental lists of one's faults, shortcomings and inadequacies.

It's a good thing to be aware of our inabilities, as this shows us the areas in which we need to improve. However, it is not good to focus solely on our negative characteristics, as this will tend to minimize our worth in our own eyes.

Know your weak areas, and focus on them only with the intent to improve, but also know your worth, look for the good in yourself and show it to others.

## Two Salesmen



### Quote of the day:

“I have always believed, and I still believe, that whatever good or bad fortune may come our way we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value.” — Hermann Hesse

### Think about it:

A major factor in making progress is shedding any mindset that holds you back, and taking on a new mindset that will have a positive effect on your behavior and outlook. We all have some wrong attitudes, so it behooves us to find out what those are and work to do whatever is necessary to transform them into positive ones.

The definition of mindset is, “A set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines somebody’s behavior and outlook.” What this means is that the way we look at things, our attitudes, the things we think and believe, determine our behavior.

*To illustrate this point, consider the story about two shoe salesmen who were sent to Africa. The first salesman wrote the home office saying, “Nobody wears shoes here,” and turned in his resignation. The second salesman was thrilled with the potential he found and wrote home saying, “Everybody in Africa needs shoes!”*

The first fellow’s mindset, his negative attitude, caused him to resign. He had the wrong outlook about the situation, and this way of thinking determined his behavior, which in this case was to give up in despair. Contrast this to the other fellow who had a positive mindset. “Everyone in Africa needs shoes!” What a difference! The positive mindset brought faith. Where one man saw an impossible situation, the other saw endless possibilities. Clearly, our mindset affects our outlook and, most importantly, our behavior.

To get the most out of life and give the most in return, it’s important that we shed any negative mindsets that hold us back, and instead embrace new, positive mindsets that will change our behavior and performance for the better. A positive mindset will help us to act in a positive manner.

What mindsets do you need to change?

## No Impossibilities



### Quote of the day:

“There are few who realize what possibilities are locked up within them until some necessity compels them to attempt something they have always considered impossible.” — Author Unknown.

### Think about it:

*When Michelangelo was ordered to decorate the walls of the Sistine Chapel, he refused. He had never done any work of that kind, and said he could not do it. He was told his refusal would not be accepted. When he discovered that there was no alternative without unpleasant consequences, he mixed his colors and went to work. And thus came into being the world's finest painting.*

It's interesting how when we are pushed into a situation that we feel we can't do we usually can and often well. How many master pieces are going undone because we think we can't do something? Is there anything in your life you are accepting that you can't do? Don't wait for necessity to compel you, attempt that thing you consider impossible.

June  
Day 152  
Attitude

## Choices



### Quote of the day:

“Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.”  
— William Jennings Bryan

### Think about it:

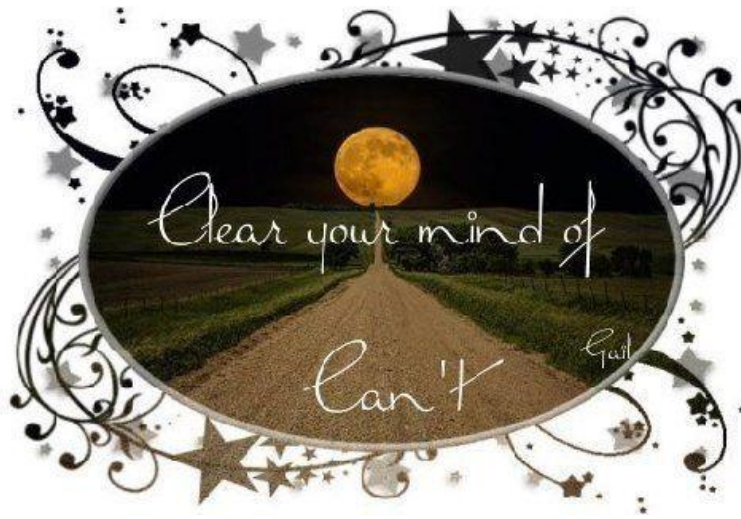
Choosing a positive attitude is a process. We don't just choose it once and expect everything to be perfect from that moment on. We will still experience setbacks, delays, accidents, frustrations, arguments, fatigue, and fear. The secret is how we choose to react to these experiences. Do we want to let them ruin our day, or do we choose to pick ourselves up and look hopefully to the future again? We do have the power to choose.

You may have noticed that each experience often determines the quality of the next experience, causing a chain reaction in our lives. If one little thing goes wrong, it can throw off our plans for the rest of the day. In this context, it's easy to see how a positive attitude can be powerful. Rather than allowing one incident to ruin our day, with a positive attitude we are able to shrug it off and continue on without a hitch. By choosing a positive attitude each day, we are actually attracting more positive experiences, and reducing the likelihood of negative ones.

I like this thought! Today I choose to attract more positive experiences. If you do the same, let me know what positive happenings come your way.



## Slash The Words Can Not From Your Vocabulary



### Quote of the day:

"Can't is the worst word that's written or spoken; doing more harm here than slander and lies; on it is many a strong spirit broken, and with it many a good purpose dies." — Edgar Guest

### Think about it:

Let's continue our battle against limiting beliefs. Let's slash the word "can't" from our vocabulary. When that negative inner chatter says you can't do something, let the words of the poem from Edgar Guest ring in your ears saying, "I can."

Can't is the word that is foe to ambition,  
An enemy ambushed to shatter your will;  
Its prey is forever the man with a mission  
And bows but to courage and patience and skill.  
Hate it, with hatred that's deep and undying,  
For once it is welcomed 'twill break any man;  
Whatever the goal you are seeking, keep trying  
And answer this demon by saying, "I can."



## Yom Kipper



### Quote of the day:

"He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven." — Thomas Fuller

### Think about it:

Among people of the Jewish faith, the holiest day of the year is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It's a day set aside for prayer and fasting while people account for their sins and seek reconciliation with God. According to tradition, a person who sincerely repents on this day will be forgiven by God.

But there's another part to this great day of healing. It involves being forgiven by those who have been offended. This can't happen until the offending person goes to the one who has been hurt and speaks healing words.

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a National Day of Atonement, regardless of one's faith, in which everyone made the effort to try and heal our broken relationships? Why wait for that? We can turn any day we want into a day to make amends. We already have the words, "Please forgive me and I forgive you." We just need to say them.

Is this your day of atonement?

## Do What Is Right



### Quote of the day:

"The value of a man should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive." — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

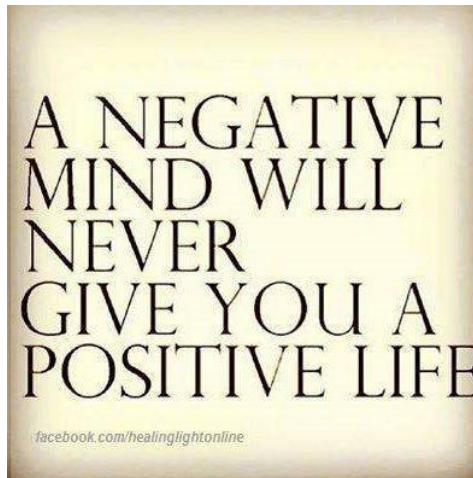
*A well-known German preacher of the 17th century, named August Francke, founded an orphanage and took in homeless children right off the streets in Halle, Germany. One day when he was desperately in need of funds to carry on his work, a destitute Christian widow came to his door begging for money. All she wanted was one gold duckte. Because of his own financial situation, he politely but regretfully had to refuse. He just didn't have it to give to her. Disheartened, this woman sat down and began to weep.*

*Francke was so moved by her tears he said, "Wait a minute. Let me go in and talk to the Lord about this." He went into the orphanage, closed the door to his office and began to pray, seeking God's guidance. As he prayed, he felt that the Spirit of God wanted him to give that woman his last gold coin. Trusting the Lord to meet his own needs, he gave her the money. He had no anticipation of anything in response; he just did what was right.*

*Two mornings later he received a very warm letter of thanks from this widow. She wrote that because of his generosity she had asked the Lord to shower the orphanage with gifts. That same day he received 12 gold coins from a rich woman, and 2 from a friend in Sweden. He thought that he had been amply rewarded for his good deed to this woman, but shortly after that he was informed that Prince Ludwig von Vertenberg had died, and in his will he had directed that 500 gold pieces be given to the orphanage.*

This is the attitude that God looks for among His people. He wants us to cast our bread upon the waters, to give without regard to rewards. This pearl of wisdom teaches us simply to do what is right, and let God take care of the rest.

## Don't Sweat The Small Stuff



### Quote of the day:

“Often we allow ourselves to be upset by small things we should despise and forget. We lose many irreplaceable hours brooding over grievances that, in a year's time, will be forgotten by us and by everybody. No, let us devote our life to worthwhile actions and feelings, to great thoughts, real affections and enduring undertakings.” — Andre Maurois

### Think about it:

It's so easy to fall into the habit of focusing on the negative, and those who do, most often find that their lives are not as happy as they could be. This is why it's well worth our while to make a habit of focusing on the positive things of life; on the loving actions of others around us; on the blessings that come into our lives that we so often take for granted.

If you find yourself focusing on the negative, write down a list of your complaints. Then make another list of the positive things that you have in your life right now, even the ones that are easier to take for granted, such as good health and family. Soon you will forget the first list and realize it was not worth your time.

## Set Backs



### Quote of the day:

“My mother taught me very early to believe I could achieve any accomplishment I wanted to. The first was to walk without braces.” — Wilma Rudolph

### Think about it:

Sometime in life all of us face setbacks of one kind or another. Often it is some kind of health problem. Instead of being resigned to defeat, determine not to give up! A good example of that is Wilma Rudolph.

*At birth, Wilma Rudolph was tiny and sickly. She was four before she started to walk. Then she became seriously ill with scarlet fever and pneumonia. Although she survived, her left leg suffered paralysis. Determined that Wilma would walk, her mother massaged her wasted leg and taught three of her older children to do the same. So there were four daily shifts of "rubbing Wilma." When Wilma was eight, she was able to walk with a leg brace. Soon she was running and playing. She was determined to overcome her disability. Exercise helped her, and so did her mother's advice: "Never give up" Wilma didn't. And in 1960, at the Olympics in Rome, Italy, she received three gold medals. She won the 100-and-200-meter foot races and came in first in the final leg of the 400-meter relay.*

No matter if your troubles come in health or otherwise, never give up.

## The Witch Doctor



### Quote of the day:

“Men often become what they believe themselves to be. If I believe I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. But when I believe I can, then I acquire the ability to do it even if I didn't have it in the beginning.” — Mahatma Gandhi

### Think about it:

Here is an interesting story that illustrates this quote.

*The old witch doctor sat cross-legged and listened to the other African as he told his tale of woe. He had been hurt in an accident when the rocks had fallen upon his ankle, and he was told that he would never walk again, but he wanted to know if the witch doctor could cure him.*

*After looking at the ankle the witch doctor said, "Yes, I can cure you. You must go across to the beehive and push the end of your crutch into the hive then lick the honey from the crutch."*

*The African hobbled across to the beehive and thrust the crutch into the hive. Immediately thousands of angry insects came out to attack the invader from every angle. As the infuriated bees continued their attack, the man dropped his crutches and fled to the nearby dam to dive beneath the water.*

*The witch doctor chuckled. When another African asked why such treatment had been prescribed, the witch doctor replied, "There was nothing wrong with his foot. Yes, he had been hurt by the rocks, but that happened a long time ago. His ankle had recovered, but the silly man had persuaded himself he would never be able to properly walk again. His was a disease of the mind. As long as he continued to think such thoughts, nothing could be done for him. I sent him to stir the bees knowing they would make him run."*

We laugh at the humor of the story but reflect a moment on the profound truth here—so many of us have been convinced by our negative self-chatter that we can't do such and such. We worry about all kinds of eventualities and persuade ourselves that the future is dark with peril. However, if instead of sorrowfully proclaiming our fears to the world, we would proceed to act as though everything were according to our desires, we may find that we can indeed “walk.”

## The Sun and the Wind



### Quote of the day:

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.” — Dr. Albert Schweitzer

### Think about it:

I tend to agree with Dr. Schweitzer. I wonder sometimes if he acquired his wisdom from the following fable:

*The sun and the wind quarreled about which was the stronger.*

*The wind said, "I'll prove I am. See that old man down there with a coat? I bet I can make him take his coat off quicker than you can."*

*So the sun went behind a cloud and the wind blew until it was almost a tornado, but the harder it blew the tighter the old man wrapped his coat about him.*

*Finally the wind calmed down and gave up; and then the sun came out from behind the cloud and smiled kindly on the old man. Presently, he mopped his brow and pulled off his coat. The sun then told the wind that gentleness and friendliness were always stronger than fury and force.*

Next time you are trying to influence a situation, opt to show a little kindness and gentleness instead of force.



## Doing the Right Thing



### Quote of the day:

"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it." — Norman Schwarzkopf

### Think about it:

In any given situation, when you allow the voice of the higher wisdom that resides within to guide you, it is not past finding out what the right thing to do is. However, the more difficult choice remains, and that is whether or not you will take action and do it. Courage, honesty and kindness are all parts of character as is illustrated in the above quote as well as the story below.

*One sunny afternoon roughly seventy years ago, a young girl and her friends were watching through the mesh of a barbed wire fence as a group of men played football [soccer], enjoying the excitement of the game and the skill of the players. Suddenly, a kick sent the ball in an arc over the fence, and it landed near the children.*

*"It'd be great to have a ball to play with," one of the boys remarked. "Let's keep it."*

*But a girl disagreed. "It's not right for us to keep it," she insisted, throwing the ball back over the fence.*

*This simple gesture of kindness and integrity took place in the heart of Germany in the early 1940s, during World War II. The players were British prisoners of war, interned in a camp on the outskirts of town. Some of the girl's friends grumbled. After all, the players were prisoners—why should they have a ball when the children didn't?*

*There is strength of character in honesty and kindness—the moral and mental strength to step out, to give, to believe, to persevere, to be true to one's convictions, even when it means enduring challenges or paying a price. These are the kindnesses that leave a lasting impression. It's been nearly three quarters of a century, but there may yet be survivors of that summer scene—and if so, I imagine they might remember my grandmother, the village girl who returned a football. — By Olivia Bauer.*

Do you have the moral courage and character to do the right thing?

## Forgiveness Myths



### Quote of the day:

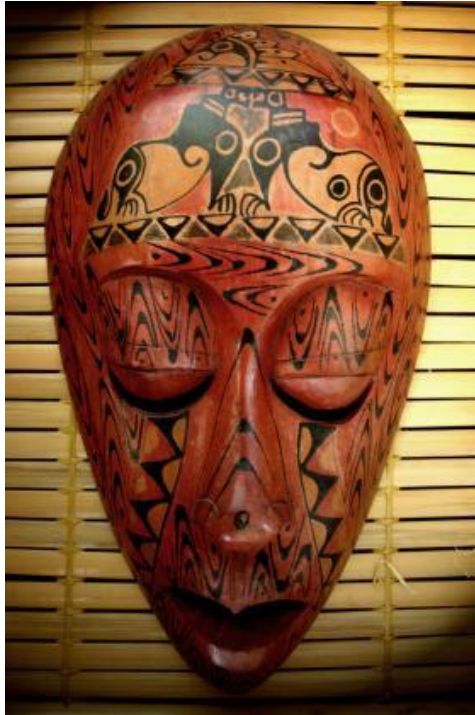
"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it." — Mark Twain

### Think about it:

Here are five myths about forgiveness. See if any of them are stopping you from forgiving.

- Myth #1. It isn't really that important. The cost of not forgiving someone is greater than most of us realize. It is a significant drain on our energy to carry bitterness around. And not only do we end up infecting ourselves with our own hurt and anger, but we can poison those around us as well.
- Myth #2. If we forgive, we are condoning someone's bad behavior. This is a misperception. Forgiveness does not imply that you agree with or accept the behavior. To forgive is actually recognition of human frailty.
- Myth #3. We insist that the time is never right to forgive the person. Actually, there's never a good time not to forgive.
- Myth #4. It's not okay to ask for an apology. So often people wait, hoping that one day an apology will magically appear. In most cases, people don't even realize that they have offended you so how would they think of apologizing? It is up to you to let someone know when they've hurt you and ask for an apology. If an apology is not enough for you, go ahead and ask them to make amends.
- Myth #5. You can't forgive someone unless they apologize. Wrong again. The real key to forgiveness is realizing that you can do it regardless of what the other person says or does or doesn't do. The forgiveness isn't so much for them as it is for you. We can't control what others do. We can only control ourselves.

## Everything Happens For A Reason



### Quote of the day:

“In time, all things work to your advantage when you pursue them with an open heart.” — Miyomoto Musashi

### Think about it:

I agree with Mr. Musashi. I try to live by the idea that all things that come into my life are for a reason and turn out good for me in the end. I recently read an African folktale which illustrates this principle.

*The story is told of an African king's close friend who had a habit of looking at every situation positively and remarking, "This is good!" One day the king went on a hunting expedition giving his friend the job of loading his guns. The friend did something wrong as one gun misfired and blew the king's thumb off.*

*"This is good!" the king's friend remarked as usual. "No, this is not good!" the king replied, and he sent his friend to jail.*

*Later, the king was hunting when cannibals captured him. However, before cooking him they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. The cannibals had a superstition that forbade them from eating anyone who was less than whole, so they sent the king on his way. The king was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb and regretted the way he had treated his friend, so went straight to the jail to release him.*

*On their reunion the king said. "It was good that my thumb was blown off." And he proceeded to tell his friend about his brush with death. "I am sorry for sending you to jail for so long," he said. "That was very bad of me!"*

*"No," his friend replied, "This is good!" "What do you mean?" "If I had not been in jail I would have been with you and the cannibals would have eaten me."*

The moral: You never can tell what bad situation you are spared from, so be thankful for everything that comes your way, as there is always some good reason.

## No One to Divide With



### Quote of the day:

“The secret of human happiness is not in self-seeking but in self-forgetting.” — Theodor Reik

### Think about it:

This reminds me of the story of an orphan boy named Billy who sold newspapers on the street.

*One day a man stopped to buy a paper, and while the man was searching his pocket for a coin, he asked Billy where he lived.*

*"In a shack down by the river," Billy replied.*

*"Who lives with you?"*

*"Only Jim. Jim is crippled and can't do no work. He's my pal."*

*"Then you'd be better off without Jim, wouldn't you?" the man ventured.*

*Billy's answer came with some scorn. "No sir, I couldn't spare Jim. I wouldn't have nobody to go home to. An' say, mister, I wouldn't want to live and work with nobody to divide with—would you?"*

If you think about it, aren't we all like Billy? Don't we all need a friend—someone to talk to and do things with, who can share our thoughts and feelings and experiences, our ups and our downs, someone we can "divide" with? If you are looking to be happy, maybe take a tip from Billy and the above quote and instead of being self-seeking, start being "self-forgetting".

## Solitude



### Quote of the day:

“When from our better selves we have too long been parted by the hurrying world, and droop. Sick of its business, of its pleasures tried, how gracious, how benign in solitude.” — William Wordsworth

### Think about it:

When was the last time you carved out a chunk of time to enjoy the power of solitude—to restore, refocus, and revitalize your mind, body, and spirit?

All of the great masters mention the reoccurring theme of the importance of taking time to be quiet, to meditate, reflect, or to think about their works, be it art, music, science or literature, etc. They seemed to have all arrived at the same conclusions, that taking time to reflect is very beneficial.

Saying that you “don't have enough time” to be silent on a regular basis, is a lot like saying you are too busy driving to stop for gas—eventually it will catch up with you.

In today's busy world, people are often too busy to stop and get quiet long enough to think, reflect, or meditate. It reminds me of the story of the mother who went to visit her son in the city.

*He rushed here and there and he was so busy that he only had time for, "Hi, Mom" and "Goodbye, Mother!" He was so terribly busy. One day she said to him, "Son, when do you do your thinking? When do you take time to reflect?" That came as an entirely new thought to him.*

Many of us are the same. We are too busy to stop and take time in quiet meditation. And we don't necessarily have to be living in the fast lane to miss taking time to reflect about the deeper things of life. There are more than enough things in life to keep us occupied every waking moment, but we miss the best things when we fill up on matters of little real consequence.

If this comes to you as a new concept, why not take some time to “learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself” and discover “that everything in this life has a purpose.”

## Just Do It



### Quote of the day:

“The most effective way to do it, is to do it.” — Amelia Earhart

### Think about it:

As the following story illustrates, our limiting beliefs often make obstacles look bigger and more difficult than they actually are.

*An old farmer had plowed around a large rock in one of his fields for years. Several plowshares and a cultivator were broken on it, and he had grown rather tired of the rock. After breaking yet another plowshare, and remembering all the trouble the rock had caused him through the years, he finally decided to do something about it. He'd had enough!*

*The farmer went to the shed to get some dynamite to blow the rock to smithereens. But when he put his pry bar under the rock, he was surprised that it lifted up so easily. Turns out that the rock, which had been such a huge obstacle all those years, was just a few inches thick, and that he could easily break it up with a sledgehammer.*

*As he was carting away the pieces, the farmer had to smile, remembering all the trouble that the rock had caused him over the years, and how easy it would have been to get rid of it sooner. What had seemed so huge an obstacle was actually quite small when he was able to get a closer look at the problem.*

What sort of obstacles, or limiting beliefs are stopping you from making progress?



## The Value of ...



### Quote of the day:

“It is not good for all our wishes to be filled; through sickness we recognize the value of health; through evil, the value of good; through hunger, the value of food; through exertion, the value of rest.” — Greek saying

### Think about it:

Have you ever felt down or have the blues or in the dumps? No matter what you call it, we all get down at times, and sometimes it seems nearly impossible to snap out of it. However, no matter how low we sink, gratitude and thanksgiving are always there to come to the rescue and throw us a lifesaver, but we have to grab on to it and use it.

When everything seems to be going wrong, it seems easier said than done to be thankful, but giving thanks really does work! Not only will an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness for what you have pull you out of the doldrums, but taking a positive, grateful stance will nearly always keep you from getting down in the first place.

Even the bleakest of circumstances can be turned into thanksgiving. When you are able to “give thanks” in the toughest of times, that is when your difficulties take on meaning. Peace comes to your heart when you turn your eyes away from your troubles and toward the things that are right in your life.

Try to be thankful for your hardships by thinking of positive aspects about your difficulty. For example, say to yourself, “I am thankful for this sickness as it shows me the value of health. I’m thankful that I’m not always sick. I’m thankful for the health that I do have. I’m thankful that my health is not as bad as it could be. I am thankful that I can grow in character because of this difficulty.”

## Enjoy the Greatest Of All Pleasures



### Quote of the day:

“Giving is the greatest of all pleasures.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

How true!

Gift giving is a timeless tradition and a wonderful way of showing love. However, modern marketers have somehow found a way to take the pleasure out of giving. They have invented so many days to celebrate with gift giving, and they come around so fast that it's sometimes hard to remember which one we're shopping for or why.

So the next time you want to buy a gift to show someone how much you love them, stop for a moment, and recall the most memorable gifts you have ever received and why you still hold them dear. Were they the things you could see and hold, or the love those gifts were wrapped in?

As an unknown author wisely said “The best gifts are tied with heartstrings.” If you put the love back into giving, the pleasure and joy will follow.

Happy giving.

## Children Live in the Moment



### Quote of the day:

“The things which the child loves remain in the domain of the heart until old age.” — Khalil Gibran

### Think about it:

At some point in life, most adults have looked at a child playing blissfully and wished they could turn back the clock. Children at play look happy, carefree, and thrilled about life. They laugh a lot, are easily entertained, and get excited about the simplest things. Naturally, they have their problems and hurts too, but for the most part, children are resilient. Children *live in the moment* and generally spend more time being happy than adults do. Here are a few ways you can recapture this childhood magic.

- Rediscover the world around you. Take a closer look at things that form the backdrop of your days.
- Learn something. Children don't have time to get into ruts because they're too busy discovering new things.
- Reward yourself. Set a goal for the week and pick out a reward for when you reach it. Anticipation is one of the best incentives, and it works at any age.
- Talk to a child. If you want a fresh perspective, ask a child about almost anything. Don't be surprised if you are revisited by some of your own childhood thoughts.
- Take downtime. Your world won't come crashing down if you stop doing and accomplishing for a few minutes. Relax. Contemplate happy thoughts. Let your imagination run wild.
- Be thankful for small things. A child can be delighted by a cheap gift, a chance to go outdoors, a bit of attention, a free swing at the park.

Think of the little things you enjoy, and give thanks.

## Be Grateful To People You Meet



### Quote of the day:

"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."  
— Marcel Proust

### Think about it:

The Japanese have a wonderful custom that when they meet again, they thank the person for the last experience: "Konaidawa, domo arigato gozaimasu," which means, "Thank you for the last time."

In Iceland they have a similar saying, "*Takk fyrir síðast*" which is a common greeting. It also means "Thank you for last time," and people say it in the same breath as "Hello". Even if there wasn't a particularly meaningful exchange the last time the two met, saying this puts the current conversation within the larger framework of their long-term interactions and starts it on a positive note.

I'm sure there are similar sayings in other languages and I'd be happy to know what they are if you want to send them to me. No matter what language you speak, or if you have a similar saying or not, let us be grateful to the people we meet as there are no *random meetings* in our lives. Everyone we touch and who touches us has been put in our path for a reason.

## We Haven't Even Begun To Fight Yet



### Quote of the day:

“Effort only fully releases its reward after a person refuses to quit.” — Napoleon Hill

### Think about it:

This quote rings true in my own life. As long as I don't give up and refuse to quit, eventually I reap the desired rewards. There's no crown without a cross, no testimony without a test, no triumph without a trial, no victory without a battle! As long as you keep fighting, you'll keep winning.

*Take a lesson from John Paul Jones, the 18th century naval captain. His ship had been shot out from under him and was sinking. Half his men had been killed and many others had been wounded, including Jones himself. When the enemy captain called out Jones to surrender, Jones screamed back, "Surrender? Hell no! We haven't even begun to fight yet!"*

He refused to surrender and kept on fighting—and he eventually won the battle. That's the kind of person who wins victories—the kind who refuses to stop fighting. Are you a fighter or a quitter?

## Being Yourself



### Quote of the day:

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." —  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

This quote from Emerson is interesting as in today's world it's even harder to be ourselves than it was in his time. But no matter how hard it is, no man or woman has anything about themselves more valuable or precious than their own individuality.

The thing that has changed in the last generation or two, though, is where people are looking for the answer. For many it's not so much a search to find values and a purpose to base their lives on, as a search for an identity, an image, with a heavy emphasis on individuality.

Never has there been so much importance put on expressing individuality as in today's commerce-and media-driven world. I did a quick search on the Internet and found 153,000 sites telling me how I could express my individuality, and most of them were selling something. What most people don't seem to realize is that in our quest for individuality, we end up models of conformity—walking advertisements that promote other people's ideas, tastes, creativity, and enterprise.

God made us all different, just as each snow flake is different, so are we. Many of us strive for originality and greatly desire to be different from other people. But we often neglect to do the one thing that makes us different, and that is to be ourselves. Instead, we are apt to be imitators of other people and the way they act and think.

Reflect on this thought and see if you are an imitator or being yourself. Do as Judy Garland says, "Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of someone else."



## Every Day Is the Best Day of the Year



### Quote of the day:

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year" — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

What would you feel if you knew it was your last day to live? While considering and reflecting on that question read this story about the novelist, Dostoevsky.

*He told the story of the time he was arrested by the czar, and sentenced to die. The czar played a cruel psychological trick on people who rebelled against his regime by blindfolding them and standing them in front of a firing squad. They heard gunshots go off but felt nothing and then slowly realized the guns were loaded with blanks. The emotional trauma that went with the process of dying, without experiencing death, had a transforming effect on people.*

*It certainly had an incredible effect on Dostoevsky; He talked about waking up the morning of his mock execution with full assurance that that would be the last day of his life. As he ate his last meal, he savored every bite. Every breath of air he took was taken with an awareness of how precious it was. Every face he saw that day he studied with intensity. He wanted every experience etched on his mind. As they marched him into the courtyard, he felt the sun beating down on him and he appreciated the warmth of the sun as never before. Everything around him seemed to have a magical quality to it.*

*He was seeing the world as he had never been able to see it before. All of his senses were heightened. He was fully alive! After his captors removed his blindfold and he realized he had not been shot; everything about him changed. He became grateful to people he had previously hated. He became thankful for everything about life, but especially for life itself.*

What do you think your life would be like if you were sentenced to death, but then got your life back again? What kind of changes would you make in your life? Why wait for a life and death situation to change? Why not start making those changes now?

## Put the Glass Down



### Quote of the day:

“Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.” — Chinese Proverb

### Think about it:

*A psychologist walked around a room while teaching stress management to an audience. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they'd be asked the "half empty or half full" question. Instead, with a smile on her face, she inquired: "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz.*

*She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, it's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my arm. If I hold it for a day, my arm will feel numb and paralyzed. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn't change, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."*

*She continued, "The stress and worries in life are like that glass of water. Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a bit longer and they begin to hurt. And if you think about them all day long, you will feel paralyzed—incapable of doing anything."*

It's important to remember to let go of your stress. Remember to put the glass down! Relax and be who you are.

## Modest Needs Foundation



### Quote of the day:

"If you have much, give of your wealth; if you have little, give of your heart." — Arab Proverb.

### Think about it:

I read the following story and was very inspired by it. May it inspire you as well on your quest toward generosity.

*Keith Taylor lives below his means in an effort to help others make it to their next payday. He created the Modest Needs Foundation. In addition to his personal contribution of \$400 a month, Taylor has received over \$10,000 in donations from people who share his vision.*

*So far, the organization has provided assistance to dozens of people across the U.S. Amounts ranging from \$17.50 to \$1,000 have been used to help families buy groceries, pay medical bills, and cover education expenses. Those who have experienced Keith's generosity believe he is "proof that people are inherently good at a time when it seems to be such a rare and unusual trait." Anyone can apply for help.*

*Taylor says he will continue to help people as long as he has money. He believes "you don't have to be rich to help other people." — Adapted from USA Today.*

What a great story. What are you doing to help people in your community?

## Seven “No” Equals a Yes



### Quote of the day:

“Life is a series of sales situations, and the answer is NO if you don’t ask.” — Patricia Fripp

### Think about it:

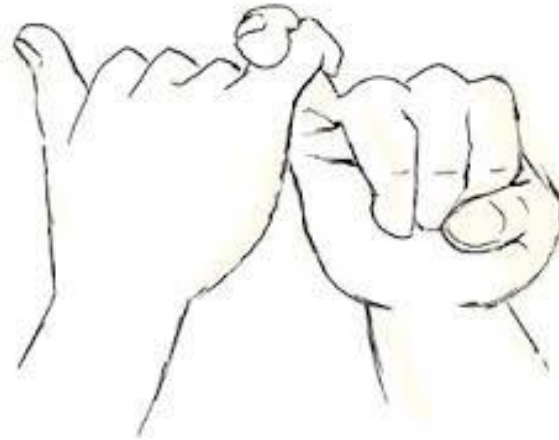
Rejection or getting a “no” for an answer is sometimes very hard on people. It certainly has been for me in times past. Recently, I came across the “one in seven” concept in three different places in a short period of time so I decided I better share it with you here. It helped me to look at rejection in a more positive light as the fellow in the following story does.

*The sales trainer told me that to make a sale I had to collect seven “no-sales” first. In other words, I could look forward to making one sale for every seven times I was turned down. I got so excited about this guaranteed sale, that I actually looked forward with great excitement to being turned down! I almost cheered every time someone said “no,” and I would rush, laughing to the next door on the street, in order to get the next “no” out of the way just as fast as I could, because I knew in my bones that every “no” was putting me that much closer to a great big sweet old “YES!”*

*Did I get discouraged when the eighth door and the ninth door yielded yet two more “no’s”? OF COURSE NOT!! Those eighth and ninth “no’s” were like money in the bank! Soon after FOURTEEN “no’s” there would be TWO great big sweet old “YES’S”!! And if I racked up TWENTY-ONE “no’s,” I knew I had THREE “yes’s” coming! Every “no” was good news!! I know if I call on enough people there will always be a YES waiting for me—and I’ll come to it in good time. So getting a “no” is good news!*

Are you letting the fear of rejection stop you from getting the seven no’s you need to get a yes?

## I Promise



### Quote of the day:

“Make sure that your actions and behaviors live up to and reflect the words and ideas, promises and commitments that come out of your mouth.” — Steve Farber

### Think about it:

I don't know about you, but I cringe whenever I hear someone say 'I promise'. There are so many circumstances that might come up to derail your promise and then in effect, your word is broken.

I have found actions speak louder than words. People don't judge us on what we say, but on what we do. It is far better to say you will do something if you can, then do it, than to promise something and not be able to complete the task.

Next time you are tempted to make a promise take a moment to think if you can really fulfill that promise or are you just appeasing the situation. Remember the words of Arthur Warwick, “I had rather do and not promise than promise and not do.”

## Go Looking for Gold



### Quote of the day:

"The man of genius inspires us with a boundless confidence in our own powers." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

*At one time Andrew Carnegie was the wealthiest man in America. He came from his native Scotland. When he was a small boy, he did a variety of odd jobs, and eventually ended up as the largest steel manufacturer in the United States (U.S. Steel). At one time he had forty-three millionaires working for him. In those days a millionaire was a rare person; conservatively speaking, a million dollars in those days would be equivalent to at least twenty million dollars today.*

*One day, a reporter asked Carnegie how it was that he had hired forty-three millionaires. Carnegie responded that the men had not been millionaires when they started working for him, but had become millionaires only as a result.*

*The reporter's next question was, "Well, how did you develop these men to become so valuable to you that you paid them that much money?"*

*Carnegie replied that people are developed the same way gold is mined. When gold is mined, several tons of dirt and stone must be moved first to get an ounce of gold, but one doesn't go into the mine looking for dirt—one goes in looking for gold.*

That's exactly the way we should view people. Don't look for the flaws and imperfections. Look for the gold, not the dirt; the good, not the bad. Look for the positive aspects of life. Like everything else, the more good qualities we look for in people, the more we are going to find.



## Fight Worry



### Quote of the day:

“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength.” — Corrie Ten Boom

### Think about it:

I know worry is a hard thing to overcome but it is something that is well worth our while to try and fight in our lives. Worry comes from the negative inner self-chatter you allow, or from one of your limiting beliefs. Trust me, it pays to do all you can to fight to overcome it so that it doesn't empty you of your strength. Have you ever noticed that it's the things that never happen that seem to worry us the most? Like the writer and humorist Mark Twain said toward the end of his life, "I'm an old man, and I've had many troubles—most of which never happened!"

To help combat worry it's wise to remember that first, whatever it is that you are worrying about has yet to happen. Second, research has shown that 90% of what you fear will not happen. Third, even if your fears were to happen, with a positive attitude you can handle whatever comes your way.

One businessman drew up what he called a "worry chart," where he kept a record of his fears. He discovered that 40% of them were about things that probably would never happen, 30% concerned past decisions that he could not change, 12% had to do with other people's criticism of him, and 10% were unfounded worries about his health. He concluded that there were valid reasons for only 8% of his worries.

Why not try this little exercise: Draw up your own “worry chart” and see how many of your worries are founded. The ones that you find aren't founded, stop worrying about, and the ones that are, make a plan to take care of.

## Compliments



### Quote of the day:

"Insults should be written in sand, compliments should be carved in stone" — Arab proverb

### Think about it:

This is a great quote, but how can you go about putting it into practice?

Possibly you could consider doing the same experiment that Mr. Crane had his students do in one of his courses which I found in the John Maxwell book, *Winning With People*.

*The students were to pay an honest compliment every day to three different people. They could increase that number if they wished, but to qualify for a class grade, they had to compliment at least three people every day for thirty days. At the end of the thirty day experiment they had to write a paper on the changes and altered outlook on life in themselves and the people they had been complimenting.*

*Some of Crane's students resisted this assignment saying they wouldn't know what to say, or that it was dishonest. However, Mr. Crane assured them, if you speak an honest statement of praise for some trait or merit that deserves commendation then it is not dishonest, even if you don't particularly bond with the person. You are merely stating a fact. At the same time you may find that nobody is entirely devoid of merit or virtue. In addition, your kind words may change someone's day in a much more profound way than you expect. You never know when your casual compliment may come at a critical point when that person is just about to throw in the towel.*

Why not start your own experiment today and see what the outcome is?

## The Mother Eagle



### Quote of the day:

“Every trial endured and weathered in the right spirit makes a soul nobler and stronger than it was before.” — James Buckham

### Think about it:

Whenever I find myself in an uncomfortable place I am reminded of the story of the mother eagle and her fledglings.

*The mother eagle builds her nest in the tallest trees or on the loftiest mountain ledges. First she lays down thorns, jagged stones, and all manner of sharp objects. Then, she covers it thickly with wool, feathers, and fur of animals she has killed. The nesting place thus becomes soft and comfortable, a delightful home for the birds which the mother will hatch. But the little creatures are not destined to remain in this inviting cradle so laboriously prepared for them. The time will come when the mother will stir up the nest.*

*With her sharp talons she will begin to point the sharp protrusions in their flesh. Up to this time the tiny creatures have had their food delivered and dropped into their mouths. After the nest has been stirred up, the eagles become so miserable and unhappy they are willing to get out, and go somewhere else. This is the mother's objective in picking out from the nest all the downy material with which it was originally lined and casting it to the wind. It is not cruelty on her part, but rather an effort to produce discontent with the old life of ease, and to whet their desire to move on to maturity.*

And so it is with us. So when you find yourself in an uncomfortable place, don't be concerned with the discomfort, but use it to your advantage remembering you are being stirred up out of your nest as the Creator is trying to get you to move on, mature, grow and to fly to new heights.

## Burn Free



### Quote of the day:

“I’m not in this world to live up to your expectations and you’re not in this world to live up to mine.” — Bruce Lee

### Think about it:

I once heard a story about a candle flame.

*It was a beautiful flame and gave light to many, but there were many hands reaching out of the darkness trying to quench the flame. It seemed as though the principal danger came from those who were trying to make the flame burn the way they wanted, and in the place and fashion they thought it ought to burn.*

*And there were those hands which were even tender loving hands of concern for safety, which were trying to shelter the flame. These were the hands of those who felt they were well-meaning and concerned for the candle’s welfare, but instead they were only smothering it, and causing it to smoke and to stink. It was a kind of smothering, protective love. The idea being that, of course, you must burn, but you don’t have to burn that way. You can burn here, or you can burn there or you can burn our way. But every time the flame tried to burn their way, it began to die. It had to be free. It had to burn free, at whatever the cost.*

*The candle struggled the most violently against those “soft-loving hands” to try and flicker out of their grasp. It seemed to wriggle between their fingers in order to burn freely. Those hands had the strongest hold and presented the strongest challenge and danger to the flame.*

You are that magnificent candle giving light, warmth and beauty to those around you. However, those we love and who love us most sometimes come closest to putting out our light than anyone else. Like the quote says, you are not in this world to live up to other’s expectations; you are in this world to live up to your own. So burn free!

## The Woman and the Bear



### Quote of the day:

"People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone." — Audrey Hepburn

### Think about it:

*I once heard a story about a woman's husband who had returned from the war with post-traumatic stress syndrome. She was unable to deal with him or get him to care for himself and was ready to leave him. But first she sought the help of a healer.*

*The healer told her she could make a potion to heal her husband, but it required the chest hair of a bear. The woman spent months befriending a bear at its cave. She brought it food and was able to get closer and closer until one day she was close enough to pull the hair and run for safety. She then brought the hair to the healer.*

*The healer threw the hair into the fire. The woman screamed, "I risked my life for that hair. You were to make a potion to heal my husband."*

*The healer smiled and said, "Now go home and be as patient with your husband as you were with the bear."*

The ability to wait patiently for something is a valuable character trait. It allows the other person time to know themselves and to heal. The only exception is when the other person's behavior threatens your well-being.



## Lose Sight of the Shore



### Quote of the day:

"You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore." — Andre Gide

### Think about it:

Before Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain into the vast unknown, it was believed that the world ended not far beyond Gibraltar. Indeed, this belief was expressed in the Spanish royal motto that read, "Ne Plus Ultra", meaning "There is no more beyond here." But when Columbus returned from the New World, he had actually discovered new horizons. This made the royal motto meaningless, until Queen Isabella simply eliminated the first word. Thus the royal motto became, "Plus Ultra", meaning "There is plenty more beyond."

We may think there are no more "new frontiers" left to explore, but look around. They may not be geographical, they may be social, political or spiritual. Wherever there is a need, wherever there is hatred, poverty, prejudice, apathy, despair or hopelessness there is a new frontier to conquer. Yes, there is plenty more beyond! Don't let your limiting beliefs, fear or short sightedness stop you from discovering what is beyond.



## Swimming With the Dolphins



### Quote of the day:

“To the dolphin alone, nature has given that which the best philosophers seek friendship for no advantage.” — Plutarch

### Think about it:

I love dolphins and find their stories so fascinating. There are many stories about the wisdom of dolphins, from how they have saved drowning people to their response toward the disabled who enter the aquarium water. I think the following account is particularly touching.

*There was a young woman with cancer who went to Florida to die. She had friends there who worked with dolphins and disabled children, and they had her join the dolphins in the water. The dolphins treated her so gently it seemed obvious they sensed her affliction. These same dolphins would swim over to a hemiplegic child and exercise the child's paralyzed limbs.*

*That young woman who swam with the dolphins called her therapist one night to say she was having trouble dying. He answered that it would be easy when she was ready. He told her he had never had a call from a dolphin with that problem. She died peacefully that evening.*

Dolphins, like dogs, have an uncanny ability to love unconditionally even unto death, their talent lies in their care, concern, love and friendship for no advantage. It would be to our benefit to learn a lesson from the dolphins.

## You Are Worthwhile



### Quote of the day:

"Every man I meet is in some way my superior." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

Often people will succeed or fail according to the amount of faith others express in them. If people feel that others expect them to fail, they often quit short of their potential. But if others express faith in them, even when it involves overlooking their weak points and forgiving them for their mistakes, this encourages them to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zone and do better. They will want to live up to the faith you have placed in them.

There are many stories of people who showed promise and potential, but were disappointed over and over again, until finally someone believed in them and it ignited in them the strength to persevere and succeed. Bob Danzig, Publisher of the Albany New York Times, and CEO of Hearst Newspapers is one of those people.

*Bob grew up in foster homes when he was a child. During that time one of his social workers said to him "you are worthwhile."*

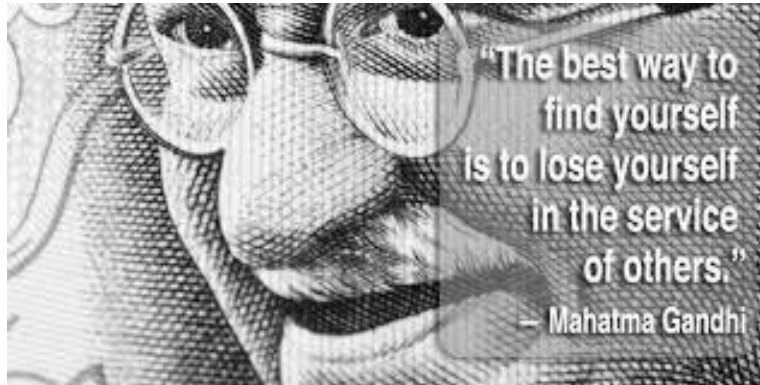
*When he first took his job at the Albany New York Times as a copy boy, the manager said to him, "you are full of promise."*

*He attributes his success to those two positive messages of appreciation played over and over again in his head.*

Those words gave him permission to aspire. I'd like to do the same for you now. Believe me when I say, YOU ARE WORTHWHILE. Now go show the world.

Day 186  
Making a Difference

Being Of Service



**Quote of the day:**

"There is incredible value in being of service to others. I think if many of the people in therapy offices were dragged out to put their finger in a dike, or take up their place in a working line, they would be relieved of terrible burdens." — Elizabeth Berg

**Think about it:**

*Dr. Karl Menninger, the famous psychiatrist, once gave a lecture on mental health, and then answered questions from the audience.*

*"What would you advise a person to do," asked one man, "if that person felt a nervous breakdown or depression coming on?"*

*Most people expected him to reply, "Consult a psychiatrist." To their astonishment, he replied, "Lock up your house, go to the poor area of town, find someone in need and do something to help that person."*

The moral of the story is when you help others you help yourself. Like Booker T. Washington says, "If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else."

## Helping Others



### Quote of the day:

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

The natural law of giving is just as definite as the law of gravity; what goes up will eventually come back down. When we sincerely help someone else either financially or otherwise, we also benefit. Somehow, somewhere, sometime, acts of kindness always come back to us. It may be through receiving appreciation from the one we helped, or through receiving an unexpected blessing, or simply through the satisfaction of knowing we did the right thing.

Helping others isn't always about some big project we undertake. Showing kindness can be as simple as giving a smile, a pat on the back, a hug, or an encouraging word to someone who is down; it could be lending a listening ear, or passing on some information that you know will benefit another; or using your skills and talents to help someone in need. One thing is certain, whether you show kindness in big ways or small, it always reaps positive results.

Why not look around and see how you can spread some kindness today—then put action to your plan and see what comes back to you!

## Kindness Pays



### Quote of the day:

“Nobody who ever gave his best regretted it.” — George Halas

### Think about it:

You never know when an opportunity will appear. I have found that giving your best in every situation is a great way to be prepared for that opportunity. The following story so aptly portrays this.

*One night two tired elderly people arrived at a third class hotel. They approached the night clerk and the husband pleadingly said, “My wife and I have been all over the city looking for a place to stay. The hotels at which we usually stay are all full. We’re dead tired and it’s after midnight.”*

*The clerk answered, “I don’t have a single room except my own. I work at night and sleep in the daytime. It’s not as nice as the other rooms, but it’s clean, and I’ll be happy for you to be my guests for tonight.”*

*The next morning at the breakfast table, the night clerk recognized the two people, and said he hoped they had had a good night’s sleep. They thanked him most sincerely.*

*Then the husband astounded the clerk with this statement, “You are too fine a hotel man to stay in a hotel like this. How would you like for me to build a big, beautiful, luxurious hotel in New York city and make you general manager?”*

*The clerk finally stammered, “It sounds wonderful.” His guest then introduced himself. “I’m John Jacob Astor.”*

So, the Waldorf Astoria Hotel was built, and the night clerk became the manager and in the years to follow was known as the best hotel man in the world all because he was doing his best and so was prepared for the opportunity that appeared.

## Mental Health



### Quote of the day:

"The measure of mental health is the disposition to find good everywhere." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

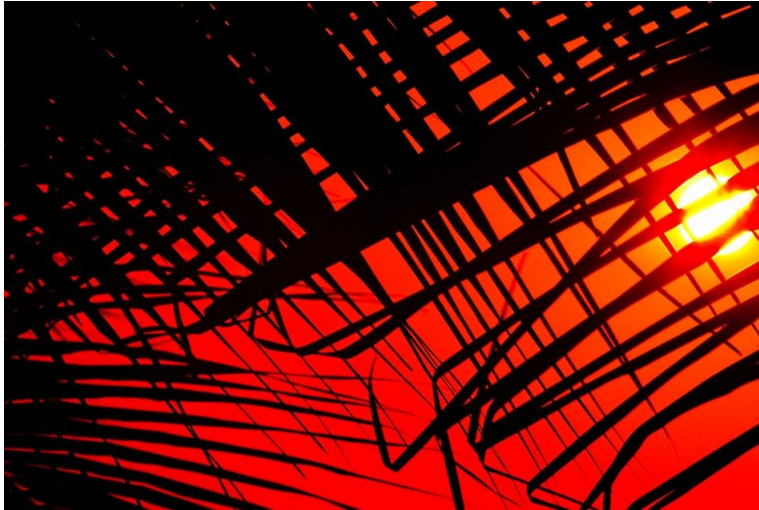
### Think about it:

*David H. Fink, a psychiatrist for the Veterans Administration and author of "Release from Nervous Tension" made a study on the stressed and mentally unbalanced. He studied two groups, the first group was made up of thousands of people who were suffering from mental and emotional disturbances; the second group contained only those who were free from such tensions. Gradually one fact began to stand out: those who suffered from extreme tension had one trait in common—they were habitual faultfinders, constant critics of people and things around them whereas the men and women who were free of all tensions were the least fault finding.*

It would seem that the habit of criticizing is a prelude or mark of the nervous, and of the mentally unbalanced. Take a moment to determine how critical and fault finding you are and take measures to correct that before your stress and tension becomes unmanageable.



## Bend With The Wind



### Quote of the day:

“Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind.” — Bruce Lee

### Think about it:

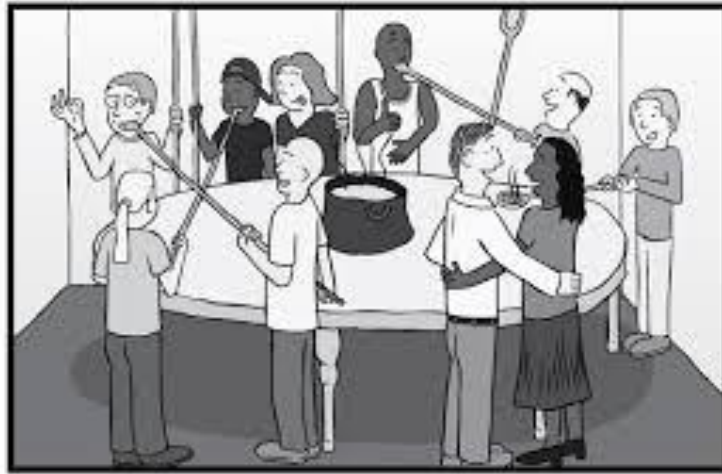
That quote reminds me of an experience I had. One day while sitting in the car waiting for someone I was watching a palm tree bend and sway and flow with the wind. It was like a beautiful dance. The more the wind blew the wilder the dance was. It was inspiring to watch the palm so gracefully flow with the change of the wind. The same day as we drove home we passed by a sturdy tree which had been blown over by the same wind sending it crashing into a wall and destroying it.

It got me thinking that life is a lot like those two trees. We can choose either to bend and flow with the winds of adversity, creating an exciting wild dance which brings inspiration to all those watching, or we can be stiff and ridged and be blown over possibly causing damage to those around us.

The choice is ours. I prefer to dance with the winds of adversity. What will you choose?

Day 191  
Giving

In Giving We Receive



**Quote of the day:**

"For it is in giving that we receive." — Francis of Assisi

**Think about it:**

Here is a cute story that illustrates this quote.

*A man spoke with the Lord about heaven and hell. "I will show you hell," said the Lord, and they went into a room that had a large pot of stew in the middle. The smell was delicious, but around the pot sat desperate people who were starving. All were holding spoons with very long handles that reached into the pot, but because the handle of the spoon was longer than their arm, it was impossible to get the stew into their mouths. Their suffering was terrible.*

*"Now I will show you heaven," said the Lord, and they went into another room identical to the first one. There was a similar pot of delicious stew, and the people had the same long-handled spoons, but they were well-nourished, talking and happy.*

*At first the man did not understand. "It is simple," said the Lord. "You see, they have learned to feed each other."*

We could all have heaven on earth if we would think of others and learn to feed and care for each other. Saint Francis knew the secret; it is in giving that we receive.

## Lamplighter



### Quote of the day:

“Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened.” — Buddha

### Think about it:

In many countries the Festival of Lights is being celebrated. From what I understand it is a celebration of light over darkness—good over evil. It can be discouraging thinking about the negative environment that exists in the world today. An environment filled with greed, violence, and a pervading feeling of hopelessness. How can we bring light into a world that all too often seems so dark and hopeless? How can we be enough of a positive influence in the lives of others that they would not just survive, but instead willingly work to change the world around them? Perhaps the following story will help give you insight on how to combat the darkness.

*Around the turn of the century in England, a lamplighter would go up and down the streets lighting the streetlamps. He carried a long pole that had a small candle on top with which he would reach up to light the kerosene-fed lamps. From a distance you could not see a lamplighter very well, the light from one small candle was not very bright in the surrounding darkness of night. You could follow the progress of the lamplighter as he went along a street. The presence of his candle was barely visible until it joined with the flame of the streetlamp being newly lit. A radiant glow erased a portion of the night's darkness, and looking back down the street, you could see that the light from the glowing streetlamps made the entire street bright as day. The darkness was held at bay.*

We all can be like the lamplighter by sharing from our own flame in order to light other's individual lamps. By sharing our wisdom and demonstrating our love, we can provide the fuel necessary to nourish and sustain other's flames. Together we can become bright enough to conquer the darkness and hopelessness of the world.

## Sharing Is Caring



### Quote of the day:

"We are rich only through what we give, and poor only through what we refuse." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

The following is a fable about what happens to the selfish.

*A young oak tree was growing tall and strong. It rejoiced when it bore its first crop of acorns.*

*Then one day, it heard the rustling of a nearby bramble bush. "These forest trees are our greatest enemies," railed the bramble. "Look at all the space they take up. Just look at all the nourishment they take from the earth!"*

*Some moss, growing at the foot of the parent-oak said to the bramble, "Oh, but see what beautiful shade they give! How cool and pleasant it is here, and how glad the poor animals are to lie down during the heat of the day, out from the blazing heat of the sun. And see how the birds build their nests among the sturdy branches."*

*The selfish bramble replied, "All I know is they absorb a lot of nourishment, and they spread themselves out as if the world belonged to them. Cut them down, I say, and let us brambles take over."*

*"But you are forgetting all the acorns the trees provide," chirped another voice. "We squirrels love them and so do the pigs. The oaks give them gladly and for nothing."*

*"There, you see," said the bramble. "For nothing! Why should they be giving things for nothing? When it comes to us brambles, we give blackberries, but, in return, we snag all we can with our thorns. I don't believe in giving anything away for nothing."*

*The young oak listened attentively and soon began asking itself, "Yeah, why should I give away my acorns? Why should I shelter all these creatures? What do they ever do for me?" Thereafter, whenever the squirrels and the pigs scampered and rooted for acorns, and whenever the weary cows and deer came to rest beneath the branches, the young oak shook its branches and said, "Go away. You can't share in my acorns or rest in my shade anymore."*

*Slowly, the young oak's sap turned to poison. The mighty oak began to wither from the inside out. The seasons came and went as usual, but the massive oak shrank into itself.*

*The wind whispered and the other trees murmured, "Give, give, or how shall you receive? Bless, or there is no room for blessing." But the oak tree still muttered to itself, "Why should I?" It had rotted by now, to the heartwood, and you can see its shriveled shell whenever you go into that part of the forest.*

Don't let the voice of the selfish destroy you.

## Two Pockets



### Quote of the day:

"Give thy mind more to what thou has than to what thou hast not." — Marcus Antonius,

### Think about it:

I've put the following idea from F.W. Boreham to the test and found that it works!

*He tells of the happy soul whose home is the Other End of Nowhere. He has two pockets. One has a hole in it and the other is carefully watched that no hole develops in it. Everything that he hears of a hurtful nature—insult, cutting remark, gossip, unclean suggestion, or any such thing—he writes on a piece of paper and sticks it into his pocket with the hole.*

*Everything which he hears that is kind, true, and helpful, he writes on a piece of paper and puts it in the pocket without the hole. At night he turns out all that is in the pocket without the hole, goes over all that he had put into it during the day, and thoroughly enjoys all the good things that have come his way that day. Then he sticks his hand into the pocket with the hole and finds nothing there, so he laughs and rejoices that there are no evil things to rehearse.*

Often times we do the reverse. We place the negative things in the pocket without the hole—only to mull over them again and again, and we put the good things in the pocket with the hole so that they are quickly forgotten. Think about this—which would you prefer to do?

## Success From Failure



### Quote of the day:

“Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success.” — Dale Carnegie

### Think about it:

Some of the most popular products we use today were accidents stumbled on by clumsy scientists, chefs who spilled things, and misguided inventors. We can all take comfort in knowing even some huge mistakes can come with silver linings, sometimes big enough to change entire industries.

*Industrial equipment stabilizer was the intended use of the springs naval engineer Richard James was developing in 1943. The sensitive springs were meant to keep fragile equipment steady on ships. Then James knocked one of his new springs from a shelf and, like a kid on Christmas morning, watched it do that famous Slinky walk down instead of just hitting the ground. He took the creation home to show his wife, Betty, who saw the potential for a new toy. After consulting the dictionary, a name sprung to mind: Slinky, a Swedish term meaning "sleek and sinuous." By time the toy was demonstrated in front of Gimbel's Department Store in Philadelphia, during the 1945 Christmas season, it was clear it would be a best toy seller.*

James turned his seeming failure into success. What failure do you need to take a closer look at and see if you might be missing out on success?



## You're Billboard



### Quote of the day:

“Tis easy enough to be pleasant, when life flows along like a song; but the person worthwhile is the one who will smile when everything goes dead wrong.” — Ella Wheeler Wilcox

### Think about it:

Your face is your own personal billboard along the highway of life. It's your means of unspoken communication, your first and most powerful “advertisement.”

Many people don't put enough emphasis on making sure their billboard is displaying the right message. They walk around with their worries or woes or whatever else is on their mind, written all over their face. Their introspection and stress can't help but show and are bound to affect others negatively. That sort of message is enough to repel all but their most understanding and loyal friends. But other people have a knack for staying cheerful no matter what they are going through. They have a bright countenance that attracts others.

If you want to turn your life around, let your face send a positive message that will lift others' hearts. Concentrate on having a pleasant facial expression that conveys faith, optimism, kindness, approachability, concern for others, and a joy for living and see what happens.

## What You Do Makes a Difference



### Quote of the day:

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does." — William James

### Think about it:

This is certainly a quote to live up to, as everything you do or say makes a difference in someone's life.

Remember that your actions, no matter how small or insignificant they might seem to you, influence the world and people around you. One word or action on your part could inspire another person to act in a similar way, and depending on the nature of that act, it could have negative or positive repercussions for that person and/or a larger group of people.

Take a moment and write down one thing you did today. Then write down the effects that one action had on your life and those around you. Did it impact them for good or for bad?

I don't know if it will for you, but this exercise helped me take notice and be more careful about the things I do and say, realizing my actions really can make a difference, either for better or worse, in other's lives.

## Lift Yourself By Your Thoughts



### Quote of the day:

"We lift ourselves by our thought. If you want to enlarge your life, you must first enlarge your thought of it and of yourself. Hold the ideal of yourself as you long to be, always everywhere." — Orison Swett Marden

### Think about it:

I have found that the way you feel about yourself has a huge effect on the way you treat others, and on the kinds of choices you make. Your self-worth or self-esteem includes the value you place on yourself as a person, your achievements, your place in the world, and the way you think about how others see you. How much you value yourself is how much you will value others.

Many people suffer from low self-esteem and I understand there are many reasons for that--being harshly criticized, ridiculed, ignored, or made to feel inadequate, among a few. Fortunately, no matter what your experiences have been up until now, you can improve your self-esteem, and the self-esteem of those around you. First and foremost it is your choice to believe that you are worthy because you are.

Our thoughts are very important, yet we often think that they don't matter much, because they *seem* small and invisible and therefore of no consequence. But the truth is, our thoughts really have the power to make or break us. Through the thoughts we think about ourselves, we can conclude that we are valuable, or we feel worthless.

Make an effort to think positively about yourself. You are unique. There is no one who is exactly like you in the whole history of humanity. That in itself makes you of great value!

## Bring Love Back to the World



### Quote of the day:

"Have you a kindness shown? Pass it on. It was not given for thee alone. Pass it on. Let it travel through the years, let it wipe another's tears, till in Heaven the deed appears. Pass it on." — Henry Burton

### Think about it:

I just love the following story and it may even inspire you to do the same as it did me.

*I was in New York the other day and rode with a friend in a taxi. When we got out, my friend said to the driver, "Thank you for the ride. You did a superb job of driving." The taxi driver was stunned for a second. Then he said, "Are you a wise guy or something?" "No, my dear man, and I'm not putting you on. I admire the way you keep cool in heavy traffic." "Yeah," the driver said and drove off.*

*"What was that all about?" I asked. "I am trying to bring love back to New York," he said. "I believe it's the only thing that can save the city." "How can one man save New York?"*

*"It's not one man. I believe I have made that taxi driver's day. Suppose he has twenty fares. He's going to be nice to those twenty fares because someone was nice to him. Those fares in turn will be kinder to their employees or shopkeepers or waiters or even their own families. Eventually the goodwill could spread to at least one thousand people. Now that isn't bad, is it?"*

*"But you're depending on that taxi driver to pass your goodwill to others."*

*"I'm not depending on it," my friend said. "I'm aware that the system isn't foolproof so I might deal with ten different people today. If out of ten I can make three happy, then eventually I can indirectly influence the attitudes of three thousand more." "It sounds good on paper," I admitted, "but I'm not sure it works in practice."*

*"Nothing is lost if it doesn't. It didn't take any of my time to tell that man he was doing a good job. He neither received a larger tip nor a smaller tip. If it fell on deaf ears, so what? Tomorrow there will be another taxi driver I can try to make happy."*

*"But you can't do this all alone!" I protested. "You're just one man." "The most important thing is not to get discouraged. Making people in the city become kind again is not an easy job, but if I can enlist other people in my campaign..."*

*"You just winked at a very plain-looking woman," I said. "Yes, I know," he replied. "And if she's a schoolteacher, her class will be in for a fantastic day."*

Why not try more kindness yourself and make your part of the world a little kinder?

## No Impossibilities



### Quote of the day:

“I am looking for a lot of men who have an infinite capacity to not know what can’t be done.” — Henry Ford

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of the bumblebee. According to the principles of aeronautical science the bumblebee can’t fly because of the size and shape of its body in relation to its total wing area. However, the bumblebee pays no attention to the seeming impossibility, it simply goes ahead and flies, regardless.

We need to constantly combat the negative pull on our lives such as fear, guilt, shame, negative self-chatter, feelings of worthlessness and insignificance, worry and doubt. If you give any of these weeds an inch, they will take a mile. When negativity tries to pull you down, instead of giving into it, try replacing those negative views with positive, praiseful, grateful, faith building thoughts.

When faced with something your mind is telling you “can’t be done” think about the bumble bee and do it anyway and be the kind of man/woman Henry Ford was referring to, “having an infinite capacity to not know what can’t be done.”

## We All Have a Purpose to Fulfill



### Quote of the day:

“If God had wanted me otherwise, He would have created me otherwise.” — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

### Think about it:

There is a children’s story that illustrates this quote quite well.

*The story is about a locomotive that did not want to stay on the tracks. It wanted to wander into the towns that it passed and into the beautiful fields it saw along the way.*

*One day the locomotive decided to leave the tracks, and he did! But when he wandered into town, he created great discomfort among the people. The smoke that belched from the engine dirtied the clothes of the people of the town. The locomotive caused traffic jams and its enormous weight cracked the streets on which it rode. When the locomotive went into the fields, to enjoy the flowers that he saw there, he immediately got bogged down. Farmers had to come with tractors and pull him out. Everywhere the locomotive went he caused trouble, and the more trouble he caused, the more miserable he became.*

*Finally, the townspeople got him back on the track he was created to ride. It was then he discovered that he really could not be happy unless he was on track, following the route intended for him.*

This simple story suggests that we each have a path [track] to follow in life. When we wander off our path, we cause chaos and sadness for ourselves, as well as for others. We often are tempted to think that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, but this is not so. We are all made with certain gifts and talents—and—to fulfill a certain purpose in life. Happiness and contentment come when we stick to our purpose in life and fulfill it with all our hearts.



## Life Is Thick With Thorns



### Quote of the day:

“Life is thickly sown with thorns, and I know no other remedy than to pass quickly through them. The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater is their power to harm us.” — Voltaire

### Think about it:

I’m always inspired with stories of people overcoming adversity. Here is one such story.

*In 1938, Soichiro Honda began developing a new piston ring, which he dreamed of selling to the Toyota Corporation, but it was rejected. He went back to the drawing table, and two years later he had a new piston ring. This time, he won the contract with Toyota, but he had no factory, and concrete was rationed due to WW2. Undaunted, Mr. Honda invented a new formula for making concrete and got his factory built. Unfortunately, it was bombed—twice—and finally leveled by an earthquake.*

*After the war, Japan suffered a gasoline shortage. Mr. Honda couldn’t afford to drive his car, so he attached a small engine to his bicycle. His neighbors were soon asking him to make “motorized bikes” for them too and encouraging him to build a plant to manufacture his engines. Because he had no capital, he wrote all 18,000 bike shop owners in Japan a personal letter, explaining his vision and asking for financial contributions. Five thousand of them agreed to advance him capital for his invention ... and the rest, as they say, is history.*

What this man, and others like him have in common is that they all refused to let the limitations of their circumstances limit their dreams. Take a lesson from Mr. Honda, and don’t let the supposed “limitations” of your circumstances hinder your dreams.

## “I Was Blind.”



### Quote of the day:

“To be content, just think how happy you would be if you lost everything you have right now, and then got it back again!” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Sometimes when you are feeling jaded or blasé, you can revive your sense of wonder by merely saying to yourself: Suppose this would be the last time for me to experience this.

*A group of visitors at a resort had been watching the sunset from the gallery of the hotel. An overweight, unromantic-looking man had lingered until the last glow faded, and had seemed thrilled through and through by the beauty of it all.*

*One guest, more observant than the rest, wondered about this, and so at supper she said to this man, “You certainly did enjoy that sunset, are you an artist?”*

*“No, Madam, I’m a plumber,” he responded with a slow grin, “but I was blind for five years.”*

Few things are commonplace in themselves. It’s our reaction to them that grows dull. Take time to keep the wonder in your life.

## Generosity



### Quote of the day:

"Generosity is the perfect flower of love. It does not think who it is that needs—but gives and serves the unworthiest."  
– J.R. Miller

### Think about it:

Generosity is a large word. It has a root which means excellence, goodness. It is a noble word. Its first definition in the dictionary is "nobility; the order of nobles." The word generous was applied only to the good, the brave, the noble. There is a Prussian order of distinction, founded in 1665 that bears the name The Order of Generosity.

The brightest deeds that shine in the story of humanity are the deeds of generosity. Generosity does not merely return good for good; does not merely measure its giving by what it has received. It blesses the hand that has smitten it, it repays cruelty with gentleness and it serves unselfishly those who have done the sorest wrong.

Let's cultivate the spirit of generosity. Think of how we enjoy God's goodness, and likewise think of those who lack the blessings we enjoy. Why not send love to the less fortunate—for in so doing we enlarge our own hearts, and fulfill the ministry of love we have been sent here to perform. This will draw us closer to those who need us, and enable to be a blessing to them. For we never can truly reach others by seeking to have them first love us; the best good we can do for them, is show them love.

This is a lesson we can never learn well enough, nor fix too deeply in our hearts. We sometimes forget that nothing is given to us for ourselves alone. When an abundance of blessing or prosperity comes to us in any form, we must not keep it to ourselves and use it only for ourselves. The good we have received, we are to bestow on others who are in need. This is our duty. So when blessings come your way, think of others who have no such blessing or favor as you are enjoying—then show them generosity and in so doing your nobility will grow.

## Actions Top Intentions



### Quote of the day:

"Good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

Below is a good story from Mara Hodler that illustrates this quote. It's something that I have been harping on for the last years—there is no progress without action.

*About 13 years ago, my husband, Sam, and I had to make a trip from Calgary, Alberta, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in Canada. We loaded up our old truck for the move and headed off. We had planned for this move pretty well. Everything was neatly packed and sorted. We had mapped our route and estimated our time. We had made a budget for gas, food, hotels, and all that. Our intention was most definitely to end up in Winnipeg.*

*On the morning of our departure, we got up early and hit the road on time. Only one problem: We didn't head east as we were supposed to. We got on the highway and out of habit began heading west. Eventually, the signs for Banff—in the opposite direction of where we were trying to go—alerted us that we might not be going the right way. As soon as we recognized our mistake, we took the first U-turn and began heading in the right direction. We arrived in Winnipeg only slightly delayed.*

*The point isn't just that Sam and I are directionally challenged, but that it's the road you're on, not your intentions, that determines where you end up. We had absolutely no intention of going to Banff and every intention of going to Winnipeg; but regardless, we would have ended up in Banff if we'd stayed on our first route.*

At the end of the day, actions are going to top intentions every single time. Our lives are the sum total of our actions, not our intentions, dreams, or wishes. The lesson is a simple one: pay less attention to intentions. Instead, look at the road you are on. If you want to make it to a different place, get on a different road. Make the connection between your choices and the results in your life. Evaluate and adjust your course accordingly. It's something we all have to do. Most of us don't get lost or get on the wrong road on purpose. Rather, we don't recognize the choices we make every day as choices that get us closer to our destination or take us farther from it. Once that connection is made, it's easier to adjust the course we're on to one that will take us to where we want to be.

Are your intentions outweighing your action? Take action today.

## Get More Personal in Your Giving



### Quote of the day:

“Today it is fashionable to talk about the poor. Unfortunately it is not fashionable to talk with them.” — Mother Teresa

### Think about it:

I read the following words below and found them quite thought provoking.

*Many celebrities are known by their causes. They host benefits for those who suffer with AIDS, rock concerts to help the victims of earthquakes or floods, and telethons to raise money and awareness of diseases. Raising money for the plight of the helpless is in vogue today.*

*Jesus had a soft spot for the poor and needy too. But He did much more than host a benefit concert or raise money. He got eyeball to eyeball with them and their suffering. He touched the leper, healed the blind, and spoke with the widow, the adulterous woman, and the Samaritan at the well. His approach was scandalous. It was radical.*

*Jesus calls His followers to follow His example to help the poor and defend the defenceless. Will you adopt an orphan or befriend a homeless individual? Will you volunteer in a soup kitchen, food pantry or shelter? Raising money helps fund causes for the poor, but it is only when we get personal, when we look into their eyes and touch them, that we love the poor the way Jesus loves them. And that's radical.—Author unknown*

Even if you are not a follower of Jesus, this message is clear about helping those that are less fortunate than us. Are there ways you can get more personal in your giving?

## Mistakes The Door to Better Things



### Quote of the day:

“Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently.” — Henry Ford

### Think about it:

Can you imagine carrying water bottles made of clay or using disposable utensils made of eggs and animal blood? The legend of the discovery of plastic says that were it not for two accidents, those might be the materials we'd be stuck with today.

*The first tale starts in the lab of Charles Goodyear who combined rubber and sulfur and accidentally put it on the stove for a period of time. When he came back, he found a tough and durable material—created through a process eventually called vulcanization.*

*The second was a spill in John Wesley Hyatt's shop. Inspired by a \$10,000 contest to find a replacement for elephant ivory in billiard balls, Hyatt accidentally spilled a bottle of collodion, only to discover that when it dried it formed a flexible-yet-strong material. He didn't win the contest (nor did anyone, for that matter), but by 1872 his brother Isaiah coined the term celluloid to describe what was becoming the first commercially successful plastic—even used in the first motion-picture film by George Eastman.*

Our mistakes can sometimes be the door to new and better things. Do you have any mistake that is a door to better things?



## The Process of Choosing a Positive Attitude



### Quote of the day:

"The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."  
— William James

### Think about it:

We see too many people today who are plagued with negative self-chatter or low self-esteem. Are you one of them? I think at times we all are. If you suffer from this, I encourage you to do the following exercise.

1. List your strengths, best qualities, what you are good at, what people like about you.
2. Take this information and formulate it into a short positive statement about a paragraph long similar to an advertisement or sales pitch.
3. Read your positive statement out loud at least twice a day—when you wake up and just before you go to sleep at night. Do that for at least a month and see the good affects.

## The Lack Luster Opal



### Quote of the day:

“It takes so little to make people happy—just a touch, if we know how to give it, just a word fitly spoken, or a slight readjustment of some bolt or pin or bearing in the delicate machinery of a human soul.” — Frank Crane

### Think about it:

*Someone tells of going into a jeweler's store to look at certain gems. Among other stones he was shown an opal. As it lay there, however, it appeared dull and altogether to lack luster. Then the jeweler took it in his hand and held it for some moments, and again showed it to his customer. Now it gleamed and flashed with all the glories of the rainbow. It needed the touch and warmth of a human hand to bring out its iridescence.*

There are human lives all around us that have hidden potential of beauty and glory. No gems or jewels are so precious; but as we see them in their earthly condition, they appear to be dull and lusterless, lacking brightness or loveliness. Perhaps they are even covered with stain and tarnished by discouragement. Yet they need only be touched by the hand of encouragement to bring out the radiance and beauty of the divine image in them. You and I can be the hand of encouragement to these drab or stained lives. Touching them with our warm love, the sleeping splendor that is in them will yet shine out again.

Are there any people in your life that need to be touched by the hand of encouragement?

## Learning



### Quote of the day:

“Learn as if you were going to live forever. Live as if you were going to die tomorrow.” — Mahatma Gandhi

### Think about it:

If today was your last day in this life and you knew it, how much time would you want to spend on something that means absolutely nothing in the overall scope of eternity? If you were dying of a terminal illness, if you knew that your life would be over when you went to bed tonight, what would you spend your last moments doing? Your minutes and hours would be valuable to you. You would have much more to do in those remaining hours than you could fit in, so you would be forcing yourself to choose things that are most important to you.

It's easy to lose perspective in the day-to-day rush of things. It's strange how the most unimportant things seem so important. Our negative self-chatter prevents us from doing many of the things we value and feel are important but if we would live each day as if it were our last, our priorities would be clearer.

Stop and think if your negative thought patterns are stopping you from learning and living life to the full. If they are, start doing something about it today.

## Doubled By Wonder



### Quote of the day:

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." — Gilbert Keith Chesterton

### Think about it:

I agree that thanks is the highest form of thought. I read an interesting article the other day by Jessie Richards that goes along with this. Here is the part that most impressed me:

*I went for a run and had an epiphany. "I am thanksgiving" perfectly embodies the kind of person I want to be, the way I want to live my life, what I want to be known for. I want to live in that state of being grateful and I want to voice it. All the time.*

*"I am thanksgiving" goes a step further than simply being thankful or being grateful, which can be done rather passively. So I now proudly affirm that thanksgiving is not just something in which I participate on occasion, or in the back of my mind.*

*May gratefulness and thanksgiving always be a part of who I am and permeate everything I say and do. I am thanksgiving, and I'm always going to smile about something!*

I think this is a marvelous concept! I also want to strive to be able to say "I am thanksgiving" and always have something to be grateful for. Want to join me in my mission?

## More Precious Than Jewels



### Quote of the day

“The words that enlighten the soul are more precious than jewels.” — Hazrat Inayat Khan

### Think about it:

Starting your day off on the right foot determines how the rest of your day plays out. Some say the first 30 minutes to an hour after you wake up is the most important part of the day. Seeing as these early morning moments are so important, and realizing that this time has a significant influence on the quality of every minute that follows, it is key that you use this time wisely.

I personally have a morning ritual. The first thing I do before getting out of bed is give thanks for four or five different things. After cleaning up, I read some inspiring, uplifting, positive material, followed by writing in my journal, including writing one or two affirmations to keep in the forefront of my mind during the day. I then spend a short time meditating or praying. All this takes about 30-40 minutes, which I gladly set aside, as I have seen what great benefits this practice has on my life personally.

You may feel that you don't have so much time to spend, but I assure you if you fill your mind with good and positive thoughts first thing in the morning—only the best of thoughts that motivate you to take good, positive action—you will notice that the rest of your day will consistently unfold in the most marvelous ways. Like the quote says, by taking in “words that enlighten the soul” you will find they “are more precious than jewels”.

## Turn It Around



### Quote of the day:

“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.” — Seneca

### Think about it:

Margo Robinson dared and kept daring until she realized her goals. Here is her story.

*Margo Robinson had no future. She had worked hard at turning around years of personal misfortunes and bad choices, but a professional life still eluded her. The odd jobs she was able to get never amounted to much, and she hungered for meaningful work--she just didn't know where to begin. That all changed the day Robinson took a job in the financial aid office of a trade school. For the first time, she had a sense of clarity about her life and her career path. That path eventually paved the way to a job at a mortgage bank. Although she had no lending experience, Robinson was the only candidate who didn't cancel her interview on the day of a winter storm. That kind of determination impressed the bank's management so much that they offered Robinson the job that very day. Within a few months, Robinson closed \$1 million in accounts. — Adapted from *Black Enterprise*.*

What things seem so difficult to you that you dare not do them? Why not take a risk. The worse that could happen is you might fail and find out where it's not at on your journey to finding out where it is at.



## Trust Men And They Will Be True



### Quote of the day:

“Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

People often lose faith in themselves and in their own abilities. They clearly see their mistakes, inabilities, and failings, and have to combat their negative self chatter which is always right there to magnify their faults and tell them, "Yes, you are a failure and you'll never amount to anything. You might as well give up now."

But when someone comes along and shows confidence in them, it can often be the ray of hope that they need to turn things around and keep going.

Try to think of at least one thing that you find outstanding in a person, and then make it your task to let them know. Reinforce the fact that you see and know how exceptional they are in that specific way. Don't be shy; they won't get tired of hearing it. What you're doing is building confidence in that one area, and as they gain confidence, they will start to improve in other areas as well.

## The Hundredth Monkey



### Quote of the day:

"The influence of a beautiful, helpful, hopeful character is contagious and may revolutionize a whole town." — Eleanor Emily Hodgman Porter

### Think about it:

Sometimes we think there is no way we can make a difference in the world. Next time this thought crosses your mind, remember the following account:

*According to Ken Keyes Jr., the author of *The Hundredth Monkey*, some natural scientists were observing monkey behavior on the island of Koshima. These monkeys lived primarily on some sort of sweet potato that they dug out of the ground.*

*One day a scientist noticed that instead of just eating the potato fresh from the ground, the monkey washed it in the stream first and then ate it. This was a new behavior—none of the other monkeys did this—but “monkey see, monkey do,” and before long all the monkeys on the island were washing their potatoes first and then eating them.*

*There was no rational explanation for this sudden change of behavior, so the scientists documented it as the *Hundredth Monkey Phenomenon*.*

Go ahead and be the first monkey to change things. Start your project. It does make a difference.

## Look For The Good



### Quote of the day:

“Things turn out best for the people who make the best out of the way things turn out.” — Art Linkletter

### Think about it:

Want every day to turn out well, no matter what the circumstances? Here is the secret: Look for the good in every situation. There is a positive way to look at any difficulty or disappointment.

Have you ever had a day that went great and you realized later that it all started when you met someone who was especially nice to you? Maybe it was the way someone smiled at you, or the way they held a door open for you--only a little gesture, but one that had a positive impact on your day. On the other hand, have you ever had a bad day just because you crossed paths with someone who was in a foul mood? Or maybe you had an accident and spilled your coffee. When these bad moments occur there is no need to let them snowball and cast a shadow on your whole day.

Don't let one little moment of mishap spoil your entire day but instead, when an accident happens, instantly look for a good and positive take on it, like being thankful that you don't spill your coffee everyday or that you even have coffee at all, or give that grumpy person the benefit of the doubt--who knows what they could be going through? Moment by moment our level of happiness is determined by our attitude, it's a choice we make. Choose to rise above the bad moment, and not let it become a bad day.

If you are inclined to dwell on the negative, stop! Getting critical or depressed never makes things better. You might feel that you deserve a little self-pity, but you will only drag others down and feel the worse for it. Whereas if you look at even the “bad” things in a positive way, it will help you pull out of the doldrums.

There is more than enough negativity and cynicism in the world today. You can't counter the global problem, but you can control your own outlook and keep from falling prey to it yourself. Like Katherine Mylius says, “Make it a bad moment, not a bad day.”

Keep the grain of wisdom in the quote above close to your heart. Choose to make each moment the best it can be and when you do have those occasional bad moments be sure they stay that way—simply a bad moment, don't let it turn into a bad day. Determine to make the best of bad situations, and you'll make your own world a happier place.

## I Am Only One



### Quote of the day:

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do!" — Edward Everett Hale

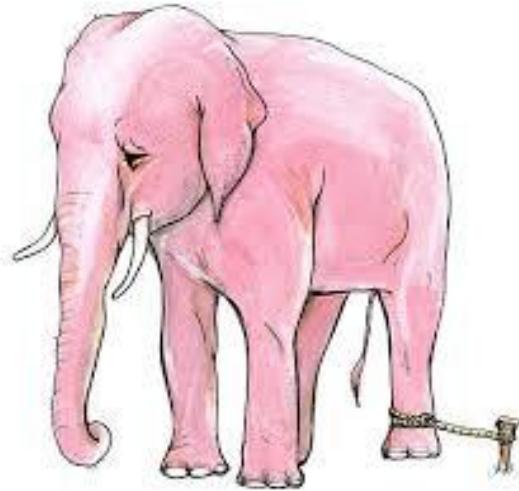
### Think about it:

Most people have great respect for Mother Teresa, yet they think they could never be like her; they could never be so saintly or make such a difference in the lives of so many. Maybe not, but the tragedy is that because they don't think they can, they don't even try.

What they fail to realize is that Mother Teresa didn't set out to become a living saint or a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. And she didn't start out ministering to multitudes of the poorest of the poor. She simply saw the need nearest her and responded. We can all do that.

Don't let what you can't do interfere with what you can do. Even if you feel like there is little you can do remember the words from Betty Resse, "If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in the dark with a mosquito."

## Chained Elephant



### Quote of the day:

“You are what you are and where you are because of what has gone into your mind. You can change what you are and where you are by changing what goes into your mind.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

*When an elephant is born into captivity, the owner ties the animal to a tree or post with a thick chain to prevent the 250-pound infant from escaping. During the first few weeks of his life, the small elephant tests the chain that binds him, again and again, in an attempt to free himself and wander as his nature urges him to do. His efforts, however, are no match for steel links. Over the course of a few weeks, he eventually learns that his resources are no match for the hardness of the chain. He gives up any further attempts to free himself, and thus relegates himself to a life within a small circle.*

*As an adult elephant conditioned by a past experience, he can now be tethered to a small tree with the thinnest of ropes or, in some cases, no rope at all. He makes no attempts to wander because he carries with him, for life, the belief that he does not possess the power to break the ties that bind him. The adult elephant could easily snap the rope or uproot the tree to which it is attached, but he makes no such effort, because early in life, he was taught that true freedom was not available to him. For the remainder of his life, he is tame and nothing like the captivating, powerful creature he was born to be.*

Do you feel your life has been shackled by what you have been conditioned to believe? Break free from your limiting beliefs and live your full potential.

## Integrity



### Quote of the day:

"Like courage, integrity is also a virtue. It, too, is a habit of character, something that exists over a long period of time. People don't have integrity sporadically, showing lots of integrity on Thursdays. Indeed, the whole idea of integrity is that it lasts. Integrity is opposed to the "here today, gone tomorrow" attitude. It is that strength of character that allows us to be true to ourselves, and in particular true to our most basic commitments." — Lawrence M. Hinman

### Think about it:

Honesty, integrity, and ethics are crucial to building a positive character. So what is integrity? Integrity is being faithful to keep your promises and fulfill your obligations and commitments. It means that when you say you will do something, you do it, without fail. Integrity means that your word is your bond, and that others can count on you. Integrity does not make excuses as to why it couldn't be done; instead, it finds a way that it can, come what may, hell or high water. Integrity is doing the right thing, no matter what it costs you. Integrity does not depend on the situation or the circumstances; it does what it should, what is right, no matter what the situation or the circumstances. Your ethical standards aren't flexible or changeable; they're fixed. Integrity is being honest, not lying or deceiving or knowingly misleading others. Integrity is sincere, truthful, trustworthy, and reliable.

Integrity and honesty are traits respected the world over, just as deceitfulness and lying are universally condemned. Practice being a truth-speaker, a person of integrity, a person who can be counted on to deal with others, squarely, fairly, and with the complete truth as often as you can.

Study the list above and compare your actions to it. If you feel you need to improve in some areas it is always better to start sooner than later. Then as Mr. Hinman says, continue to practice to strengthen your character.



## Simplicity is a Gift



### Quote of the day:

“Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler.” — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

It's when you can't find joy in the everyday things of life that you become complicated and lose the human touch. You exchange depth of character for a labyrinth of complex thinking. You sap a heart that is sensitive to the things of the spirit for mere head knowledge.

Simplicity is a gift. Everyone starts out with it, but as some people grow up they discount this gift because they associate it with ignorance, naiveté, immaturity, and a lack of sophistication. They prefer to weave a web of complexity to cover it. The gift of simplicity remains for those who have the humility and wisdom to value it and claim it as their own.

There is much to discover throughout life but you will always find that the most profound truths, the greatest beauty, and the most outstanding wisdom are expressed simply.

## Misfortune or Blessing



### Quote of the day:

“Looking back, we see with great clarity, and what once appeared as difficulties now reveal themselves as blessings.” — Dan Millman

### Think about it:

Often our tragedies, misfortunes or disappointments are really for our greater good as the following story illustrates.

*Years ago in Scotland, the Clark family had a dream. Clark and his wife worked and saved, making plans for their family of nine children to travel to the United States. It had taken years, but they had finally saved enough money. They got their pass-ports and made reservations for the family on a new ocean liner.*

*The entire family was filled with anticipation and excitement about their venture. However, several days before the departure, the youngest son was bitten by a dog. The doctor stitched the leg, but hung a yellow flag on the Clark's front door. Because of the possibility of rabies, the entire family was quarantined for fourteen days.*

*The family's dream was dashed. They would not be able to make the trip to America as planned. The father, filled with disappointment and anger, stomped to the dock to watch the ship leave—without the Clark family. The father shed bitter tears for their misfortune.*

*Five days later, the tragic news spread throughout Scotland and the world—the mighty Titanic had sunk. The unsinkable ship had sunk taking hundreds of lives with it. The Clark family was to have been on that ship, but because their son had been bitten by a dog, they were left behind.*

*When Mr. Clark heard the news, he hugged his son, and gave thanks to God for saving his family and turning what was believed to have been a tragedy into a blessing.*

Are there any disappointments in your life you need to view differently?

## Don't Wait To Start Improving The World



### Quote of the day:

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." — Anne Frank

### Think about it:

Sometimes we're discouraged and think, "Well, who am I? What can I do? The world's problems all seem so hopeless and impossible! It looks like there's nothing one person can do to change things for the better, so what's the use of trying?" And we're tempted to just give up and let the world go to Hell, which it seems to deserve!

You may not be able to change the whole world, but you can change your part of the world. If you have changed one life, you have changed a part of the world, and you have proven that there is hope that it can all be changed! The world can be changed, starting even with one person, just one person--maybe you!

Every person has his or her own destiny to fulfill. Some people realize what their purpose is at a young age and others don't know what it is until later in life, however, we will all make a difference in some way to someone by the time our life is over. It is up to you to decide if you are going to make a positive or negative difference.

Write down three things in your life that you feel will make some kind of difference in the world for good. They can be things that will influence all of humanity or even just one person. Either way is fine, but once you have determined the three things, take one step toward each of those three things this week! After you have gotten started keep on going until you have completed your three goals no matter how long it takes.

## Looking From A Different Point of View



### Quote of the day:

"If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view." — Henry Ford

### Think about it:

Perspective is a funny thing and really depends on how you or someone else is looking at a situation or a problem. Try to understand the other person's view point before insisting on having things your way.

Here's a good story to illustrate this principle and quote.

*Two travelers were approaching the statue of a knight in shining armor from different directions.*

*"What a lovely gold shield," commented one, while the other said, "You mean a silver shield."*

*As they argued with growing anger, a local inhabitant pointed out, "You are both right and both wrong. Half of the shield is gold and the other half silver, and it depends which side you see it from."*

There are two, or more, sides to every argument, situation or problem, and we should always make sure we take a close look at the other side as well as our own.

What situations are you facing that you need to look at from a different view point?

## The Lego Principle



### Quote of the day:

“All things are difficult before they are easy.” — Dr. Thomas Fuller

### Think about it:

What a true saying! I know that with the big changes in my life in the last few years, I've had to learn a whole new set of skills which has not been easy.

I was comforted by a story that my friend sent me about her youngest son who tries to copy his older brother as he attempts to make Lego creations. Some days he just feels like all he can do is break what's made, or sprinkle Lego on the floor. The younger fellow so desperately wants to be able to pick up those pieces and turn them into a fun car or airplane to play with. He tries putting the pieces together, but it never seems to work the way he has envisioned.

This is much like what happens to us when we try new things. We tend to only see the way things are now, the way we are now, the problems we face now, the challenges we're facing right now that seem to go on and on. It behooves us to learn a lesson from this little fellow and his Lego—just give things time and gain some experience and eventually things will be different. You'll learn. Things can and will change and improve, and when this happens, suddenly you'll be able to do it and you'll look back with a smile wondering what all the fuss was about.

Whatever it is that you are trying to do, just keep at it. You can do it, and things will get easier!

## Of Course You Can



### Quote of the day:

"Our chief want in life is someone who will make us do what we can." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

"Of course you can" are magical words. I've dared to do many things because of these words. We have enough obstacles to fight against, including our negative self-chatter that is always willing to tell you all the reasons why you can't do something. Therefore it is important to surround yourself with people who will believe in you and support you.

My hope is that you will find a relative or a friend, a teacher or boss who believes in you. Or, hire a coach. There will be many times in the years ahead when you will not believe in yourself, and you will benefit greatly from their encouragement and their faith in you.

It is also my hope that you will reciprocate by looking around you to find someone that you can encourage and support. There is someone who is struggling and who needs your help today. Find them, and tell them these magical words, "of course you can!"

No telling what wonderful things we can accomplish if we lift each other up and support one another. I'm looking forward to hearing about all the wonderful things you accomplish. I believe in you and know that "of course you can" do it.



## Triple Filter Test



### Quote of the day:

“Before you speak ask yourself if what you are going to say is true, is kind, is necessary, is helpful. If the answer is no, maybe what you are about to say should be left unsaid.” — Bernard Meltzer

### Think about it:

I think this quote has good advice, in addition to the story below, which expounds on the subject even more. *In ancient Greece, Socrates was reputed to hold knowledge in high esteem. One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher and said, “Do you know what I just heard about your friend?”*

*“Hold on a minute,” Socrates replied. “Before telling me anything I’d like you to pass a little test. It’s called the Triple Filter Test.”*

*“Triple filter?”*

*“That’s right,” Socrates continued. “Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you’re going to say. That’s why I call it the triple filter test. The first filter is truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?”*

*“No,” the man said, “Actually I just heard about it and...”*

*“All right,” said Socrates. “So you don’t really know if it’s true or not. Now let’s try the second filter, the filter of goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?”*

*“No, on the contrary...”*

*“So,” Socrates continued, “you want to tell me something bad about him, but you’re not certain it’s true. You may still pass the test though, because there’s one filter left: the filter of usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?”*

*“No, not really...”*

*“Well,” concluded Socrates, “if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?”*

Let’s take a lesson from this story and put our words through the Triple Filter Test before saying them.

## Three Feet From Gold



### Quote of the day:

"The last dejected effort often becomes the winning stroke." — W.J. Cameron

### Think about it:

Here is a story from the classic "success" book *Think and Grow Rich*, by Napoleon Hill.

*Darby and his uncle, over a hundred years ago, were caught up with "gold fever". They headed west to seek their fortune. After weeks of labor they were rewarded with an inkling of what they felt might very well turn out to be one of the richest mines in Colorado. But despite countless days digging and drilling, the profitable vein of gold ore they had expected to find never appeared.*

*Frustrated and discouraged, they sold all their equipment to a junk dealer for a few hundred dollars and headed home. The wise junk dealer called in a specialist mining engineer who advised that the project had failed because the Darby family were not familiar with "fault lines." His calculations showed that the vein of gold would be found just three feet from where the Darby's had stopped drilling. And that's exactly where the junk dealer discovered one of the largest deposits of gold to ever be discovered up to that time.*

*Napoleon Hill writes, "It rewarded him with millions of dollars because he knew enough to seek expert counsel before giving up."*

Don't be too proud to seek counsel and advice from an expert, even if it is your last dejected effort. It could be the winning stroke as you may be only three feet away from realizing your dreams.

## The Beautifier



### Quote of the day:

“The soul is dyed by the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you do is who you become.” — Heraclitus

### Think about it:

*There is an interesting story of one who became a writer of worldwide influence, who in her youth was said to be the homeliest girl in the town where she lived. There was not an attractive line in her face. The girl herself recognized the fact that she had no beauty, nothing in her features to win others to her, and with charming good sense and in an admirable spirit she resolved to overcome the physical disadvantage by making her life and her personality so beautiful that people would love her and be attracted to her in spite of her homeliness.*

*So she began to cultivate the graces of kindness, gentleness, and friendliness. She yielded her heart to the full sway of love. She became a minister of help, of cheer, of comfort, of joy, to all within her reach. Wherever there was sickness, care, trouble, need, or sorrow — she found her way, carrying the blessing of her kindly presence and the ministry of her gentle hands.*

*She became known everywhere as a messenger of love. People forgot her homeliness, in the congenial warmth of her spirit. She was spoken of now, not as the homely girl, but as an angel of love in the community. Her face never grew beautiful and attractive in its physical features, but there was a light in it in later years which adorned its homeliness. Love is a wondrous beautifier.*

No matter what you look like, beautiful or unattractive, we can all take to heart the message in this story.

## Little Acts of Kindness



### Quote of the day:

“The happiness of life is made up of minute fractions—the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss or smile, a kind look or heartfelt compliment.” — Samuel Taylor Coleridge

### Think about it:

I take this quote from Samuel Coleridge to mean that the little acts of kindness are what really count, such as going out of your way to help a friend; remembering to have manners; being a good listener; smiling often; and responding to others' rudeness with restraint.

Behave as if you care about others as a way of caring about yourself. Your behavior is an indicator of your character.

Here are two tips for building kindness.

- Be thoughtful. Thinking with your head and your heart can help you go a long way in putting others' needs before your own wants and desires. Look for ways you can help others at home or at work.
- Watch what you say and how you say it. Your choice of words has an enormous impact on the way you interact with others as well as your tone of voice when you speak to others.

## The Cocoon of the Emperor Moth



### Quote of the day:

“Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties.” — Charles Haddon Spurgeon

### Think about it:

Have you ever had a friend you wished so badly that you could help? I know I have. However, I have found that it is sometimes better to just listen and not try to fix them. Let them figure it out themselves or you might be denying them the opportunity to really fly as the below story brings out.

*The cocoon of the emperor moth is flask-shaped. In order for the perfect insect to appear it must force its way through the neck of the cocoon in hours of intense struggling. It is believed that the pressure to which the moth's body is subjected is a provision of nature for forcing the juices into the vessels of the wings.*

*A person was witnessing this struggle once, and out of pity took the point of some scissors and snipped the confining threads to make the exit easier, but the moth's wings never developed, and it spent its brief span of life crawling instead of flying through the air on rainbow wings.*

Let us not be shortsighted and look not with false pity on those who struggle. Instead, inspire their courage in the midst of it by reminding them of the glory to come out of their adversity.

## Make Beauty Out of Imperfection



### Quote of the day:

"Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them—every day begin the task anew." — St. Francis de Sales

### Think about it:

*A jeweler brought a large and beautiful onyx to an engraver of precious stones. "See how clear, pure, and transparent this stone is," said the jeweler. "What a fine one for your skill, were it not for this one fatal blemish!" Then he showed him at one point an underlying tinge of iron-rust, which, as he said, made the stone almost worthless.*

*But the engraver took it, and with matchless skill and delicacy wrought upon the stone, carving a graceful figure. By most ingenious and patient use of his engraving tool, he fashioned it so that what had seemed an irreparable blemish was made into a leopard-skin, on which rested the foot of the lovely figure—the contrasting colors enhancing the beauty of the lovely cameo.*

This illustration shows us what to do with the tough things we face. We often think we can never make anything of our life when surrounded by discouraging circumstances. But it is possible to make our life all the nobler, greater, stronger, more beautiful—by means of the very things which we think have potential to ruin us. We can take difficult conditions and make them yield new strength and beauty in our character.

It is useless to fret over the difficult and discouraging things that confront us—fretting will never remove them, and it only weakens our energy and mars our life! But if we meet them with undismayed courage and persistent resolve, we will conquer them, and in conquering them we will find strength of character and noble worth in ourselves.



## Listening to the Chimes



### Quote of the day:

“You can’t see the forest for the trees.” — Frederick Engels

### Think about it:

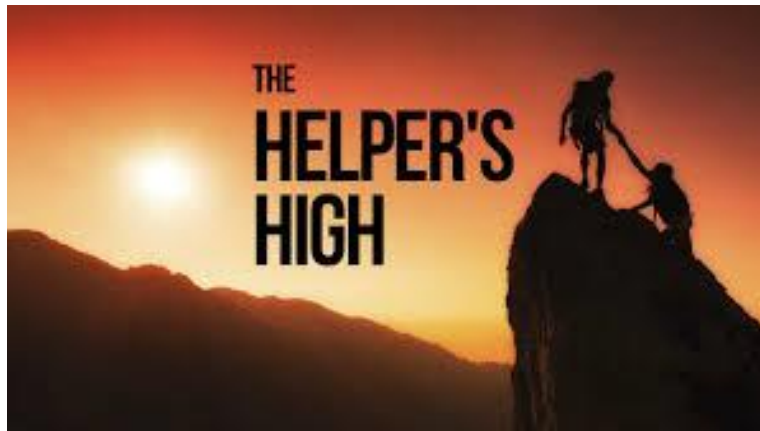
*A visitor to Amsterdam had heard about the wonderful church chimes—so the legend runs. He was told that he must hear them, whatever else he might miss in the old Dutch city.*

*The tourist did not know how best to hear the chimes, so he went up into the tower of the church to get as close as he could to the bells. He thought he would thus be best able to get the full benefit of his visit. There he found a man with great wooden gloves, like hammers, pounding on a keyboard. All he could hear was the crash of the keys, the harsh clanging and the deafening noise of the bells above his head. He wondered why his friends had talked so enthusiastically of the chimes.*

*To his ears there was no music in them, nothing but terrible clatter and clangor. Yet at that very time, there floated over and beyond the city—the most entrancing music. Men in the fields a mile or more away paused in their work to listen. People in their homes and travelers on the highways were thrilled by the marvelous notes that fell from the tower.*

The place to listen to chimes is not positioned too close to them—but a distance away, where the clangor has softened into sweet music. So it is with the experiences of life. When we are in their midst—we may only hear only the jarring notes of tension, stress or confusion, and perhaps even the bitter cries of suffering and pain. We are too close to it. But when we get farther away, when the sharpness of the ordeal is past, when the trying time is over and forgotten—the music grows sweet. Not until afterward comes, with its comfort, do we begin to understand the meaning of the experience that was at the time, so difficult to bear.

## Catching The Helper's High



### Quote of the day:

"The little unremembered acts of kindness and love are the best parts of a person's life." — William Wordsworth

### Think about it:

Maria E. Pagano, PhD, an associate professor of psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, has investigated the helper therapy principle (HTP), which is based on the concept that when people help others, they are also helping themselves—particularly when the helper and the recipient of that help share a common malady.

Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly published her review article on the topic. Among the evidence cited were studies showing that... While service to fellow sufferers is a cornerstone of 12-step programs of recovery, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Dr. Pagano noted that it is not necessary to share a common health problem in order to benefit from doing good. For instance, helping others in general has been linked with longer life, less depression, higher self-esteem and greater life satisfaction.

For a “helper’s high” and a significant health boost, lend a helping hand to someone in need.

## Hang On a Little Longer



### Quote of the day:

“Many of life’s failures are those who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” — Thomas Edison

### Think about it:

*In 1952, Florence Chadwick stepped off Catalina Island, California, into the waters of the Pacific Ocean, determined to swim to the mainland. An experienced swimmer, she had already made history as the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways.*

*The weather that day was foggy and chilly; Florence could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam steadily for fifteen hours.*

*When she begged to be taken out of the water, her mother, in a boat alongside her, told her that she was close and that she could make it. But Florence, physically and emotionally exhausted, stopped swimming and was pulled into the boat. It wasn’t until she was on board that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away.*

*At a news conference the next day, she said, “All I could see was the fog—I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.”*

Sometimes we are in a fog and feel like giving up when actually if we hold on a little longer the fog will lift and we can make it. Is there something in your life that you are in the fog about? Keep holding on a little longer.

## No Ulterior Motives



### Quote of the day:

“Did you ever stop to think that a dog is the only animal that doesn't have to work for a living? A hen has to lay eggs; a cow has to give milk; and a canary has to sing. But a dog makes his living by giving you nothing but love!” — Dale Carnegie

### Think about it:

Dale also goes on to say in his book, *How To Win Friends and Influence People*, “Why read a book to find out how to win friends? Why not study the technique of the greatest winner of friends the world has ever known? Who is he? You may meet him tomorrow coming down the street. When you get within ten feet of him, he will begin to wag his tail. If you stop and pat him, he will almost jump out of his skin to show you how much he likes you. And you know that behind this show of affection on his part, there are no ulterior motives.”

I love dogs and find that using the “dog technique” really works. When you show a genuine interest in people, are happy to see them with no ulterior motives and accept them unconditionally it's a sure way to win friends. Why not try it and see what happens?

## Enjoy the Moment



### Quote of the day:

"With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future. I live now." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

The meaning of living in the present moment, neither retreating to the past nor anticipating the future, is wonderfully illustrated by a Zen story:

*A monk was being pursued by a ferocious tiger. The monk raced to the edge of a cliff, glanced back, and saw the growling tiger about to spring. The monk spotted a rope dangling over the edge of the cliff which he grabbed and began shinnying down the side of the cliff out of the clutches of the tiger. What he didn't notice was the two mice nibbling at the rope before grabbing the rope. The monk then looked down and saw a quarry of jagged rocks five hundred feet below. He looked up and saw the tiger poised atop the cliff with bared claws and the two mice nibbling at the rope. What to do?*

*The monk then saw a strawberry within arm's reach, growing out of the face of the cliff. He plucked it, ate it, and exclaimed, "Yum, That's the best strawberry I've ever tasted in my entire life."*

*If he had been preoccupied with the rocks below (the future) or the tiger above (the past), he would have missed the strawberry God was giving him in the present moment.*

This story is extreme and not realistic, but still a good reminder not to focus on the tigers of the past or jagged rocks of the future but only on the strawberry in our here and now.

## Take Stock



### Quote of the day:

“It is not length of life, but depth of life.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

This quote reminds me of something I heard a terminally ill lady say. “I’ve been so busy with life that I haven’t had time to think. I realized while lying here that I barely know my husband, my children, or my mother-in-law, who also lives with us. I’ve been wrapped up in caring for them—shopping and cooking, doing their laundry, cleaning up after them, helping them with their homework—and yet I can’t say that I really know what they are thinking or what they are going through. I can’t tell you when the last time was that I had a deep conversation with any of them.”

I often hear people say that they want their loved ones to be happy, and that is why they need to work so long and hard. Unfortunately, the more successful they become, the busier they get and the less time they have to spend with their families—and the less they gain from their investment.

While the dying woman’s motives may have seemed noble at the time, the life she led hadn’t been able to satisfy the needs of their loved ones’ hearts, or her own for that matter, when the time came to take stock of the things that really matter.

When we make time to help others, to participate in their lives, to share in their victories and struggles, to have heart-to-heart interaction with them we are making time to love. When was the last time you made time for those you care about?



## How's Your Mental Health?

# LONGSUFFERING

### Quote of the day:

“Patience strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride, bridles the tongue, restrains the hand, and tramples upon temptations.” — George Horne

### Think about it:

I don't know if it is just me, or if anyone else is noticing that more and more people these days seem to be angry and have really short fuses.

This got me to thinking about the words *longsuffering* and *patience*. When I looked into the Greek word *makrothumia*, the word translated as “longsuffering” or patient I saw that there was another facet. *Makro* means “long” (no revelation there), and *thumia* means temper, which was eye-opening. So a more precise translation of *makrothumia* may be long-tempered, the opposite of short-tempered.

At a conference a while back, one of the speakers had said that spontaneously flying off the handle is now referred to as Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED). If sudden short-temperedness is now regarded as a mental disorder, then it makes sense that long-temperedness would be a sign of mental well-being. The speaker went on to say that IED is reaching alarming proportions, so I'm not the only one noticing this.

All that to say it might behoove us to check our mental health by how long-tempered or patient we are.

## The Canary Bird



### Quote of the day:

“The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

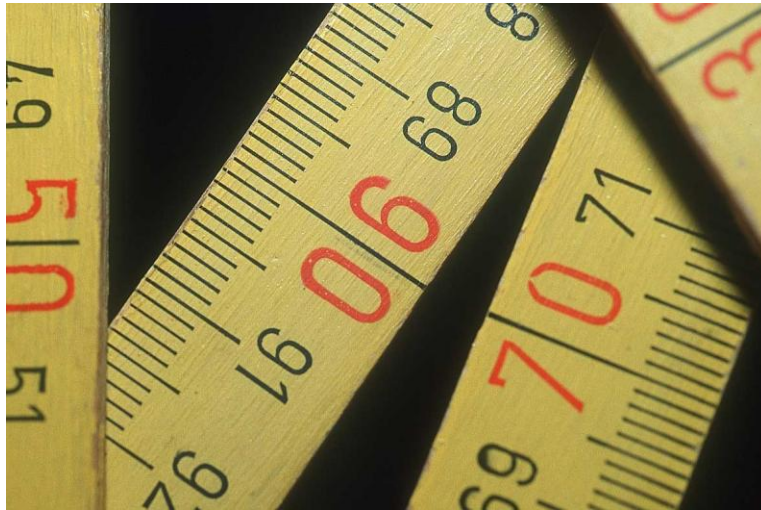
We are all sent here to learn certain things and some of those lessons can only be learned in darkness. It reminds me of the story how they used to teach canaries to sing.

*When the canary bird is to be trained, each bird is put in a little cage, with only a small hole to give them just light enough to see to eat and drink. These cages are then put in a room from which there is no light, and their teacher gives the birds a lesson every two hours.*

*First they get a lesson on the flute, then on the violin, then on bells, and last of all a nightingale is brought in to sing its wonderful notes and then to teach the birds to sing at night.*

The point is, that the canaries must learn their lessons in the darkness. They cannot learn them as well, if at all, in the light. So it is the same with many people. There are certain songs we cannot learn to sing in the sunshine. So the great Teacher calls us apart and shuts the door in order to keep out the light and exclude the world's clamor and noise, and then teaches us songs of peace, of joy, of trust, of love. Thus the painful things of this world have their place in the divine training of our lives.

## Don't Judge People By Old Measurements



### Quote of the day:

"The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew every time he sees me, whilst all the rest go on with their old measurements, and expect them to fit me." — George Bernard Shaw

### Think about it:

This quote is so applicable to life, for, almost without exception, people form a certain opinion of us in our personal or professional lives; even though we ourselves, in the natural order of events, grow, develop and constantly change. Sadly, if they are asked to express an opinion of us they are very apt to judge us by what they knew of us in a very early stage of our development. I think that all of us, as well as Shaw, would like to be judged by current standards, as we are all growing and we do certain things in stages.

Each of us are like the butterfly, we have our larva stages, our cocoon stages, and our butterfly stages, and we all grow mellow, finer, more intelligent and kindly; even more beautiful in our spirits, as the different stages come and go; as our measurements change.

One of the most delightful experiences I have is finding out that people, as a whole, grow with the years. Take a tip from Shaw and don't judge people by old measurements.

## The Duty of Encouragement



### Quote of the day:

"One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word." — William Barclay.

### Think about it:

*When Sir Walter Scott was a boy he was considered a great dullard. His accustomed place in the schoolroom was the ignominious dunce corner, with the high-pointed paper cap of shame on his head. When about twelve or fourteen years old he happened to be in a house where some famous literary guests were being entertained.*

*Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, was standing admiring a picture under which was written the couplet of a stanza. He inquired concerning the author. None seemed to know. Timidly a boy crept up to his side, named the author, and quoted the rest of the poem. Burns was surprised and delighted.*

*Laying his hand on the boy's head, he exclaimed, 'Ah, Bairnie, ye will be a great man in Scotland some day.' From that day Walter Scott was a changed lad. One word of encouragement set him on the road to greatness.*

Reach out and encourage someone today, it just might change their life.

## Forgiveness Benefits You



### Quote of the day:

“Forgiveness is almost a selfish act because of its immense benefits to the one who forgives.” — Lawana Blackwell

### Think about it:

I have a friend who recently shared a lesson on forgiveness with me that illustrates this quote.

*My friend attended a seven day retreat. One day he said something to another attendee who appeared to be very angry and upset at his comment. My friend felt bad to think he could have offended this other person. He couldn't get out of his mind how he had upset this person and he continued to punish himself feeling regret and wishing he wouldn't have done what he did. He was miserable and not enjoying the retreat experience from this time on.*

*Finally he thought, "This is crazy, I am in this beautiful place and I am torturing myself with regret because of one comment when I should be enjoying this experience." So, he came up with a plan.*

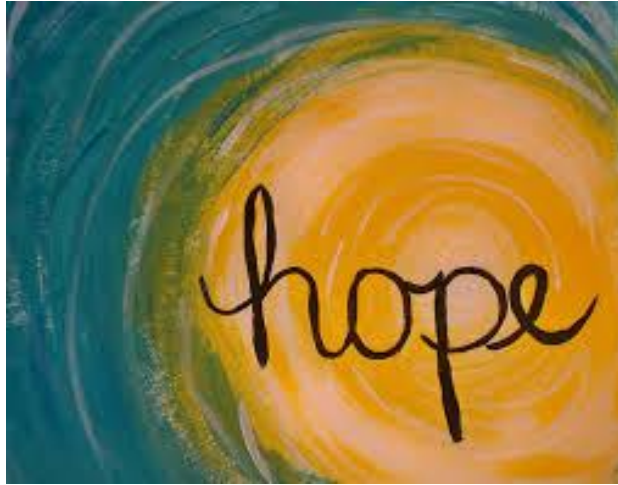
*He closed his eyes, visualized the person he had offended, and sent them his deepest apologies; he wished them well and sent them positive, loving energy with all his heart. He also sent himself positive energy and forgave himself.*

*Immediately, he felt different—he went from regret and sadness to being full of love and energy. It worked so well that he reviewed other situations he needed to forgive. He felt better each time he went through this process.*

*He knew intellectually that forgiving himself and others was important. He knew holding resentment was detrimental to making money, having a great marriage and everything else in his life. The truth is, he had not forgiven others and he had not forgiven himself despite the fact that he thought he had. When he truly wished them well and wished them success and love, even the really bad ones, it changed everything.*

Why not try the same? Think of anyone you have ill will toward and truly wish them well, success and love and see what happens.

## Never Give Up Hope



### Quote of the day:

“Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success” — Henry Ford

### Think about it:

Here's a story that illustrates this quote by Henry Ford.

*A mother of several children was committed to keeping her family together when her husband died. She worked at several jobs doing menial tasks, everything from cleaning offices to delivering coal. Eventually, she took the civil service exam and became the chief bookkeeper for the city treasurer. She used her strength and love to hold her family together and to raise her children.*

*One of the kids, though small, wanted to play football, but none of the colleges of any size offered him a scholarship. He played for a small college and excelled. His dream was to play in the NFL. He tried out for the Pittsburgh Steelers, which was his home team, but he was cut from the team in short order.*

*Next, he found a job in construction and helped build some of the skyscrapers seen today in Pittsburgh, but he held on to his dream. He did not see himself as a victim of circumstances, but as a person that would succeed despite his size.*

*What he did was look at his options and decided he would start anywhere. He played in a little league that paid him \$6 a game and was able to improve his already considerable skills. He continued to stay in contact with NFL teams in hopes that somehow he would be noticed. After seven months of trying, he received an invitation to try out for the Baltimore Colts and made the team. His name was Johnny Unitas and he has since been inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame.*

The moral of the story is to never give up hope on your dreams, do what you can to get ready while you're waiting for the opportunity to present itself.



## Creative Ways of Giving



### Quote of the day:

“A man’s bank account doesn’t indicate whether he is rich or poor. It is the heart that makes a man rich. A man is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has.” — Henry Ward Beecher

### Think about it:

Here is a thought provoking article by Peter van Gorder, which was published in Activated Magazine some years back.

*Knowing that I am actively involved in several charitable projects here in India, an acquaintance introduced me to some of his friends from the business community at a party we all attended. They happened to be discussing The Giving Pledge, an initiative headed by Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. Those three had challenged 400 American billionaires to commit to donating at least 50% of their net worth to charity and social causes in their lifetimes. “This is really taking on in India as well,” one of the men at the party said with the excitement of a child announcing that the circus was coming to town.*

*As it happened, there was an article in that day’s newspaper that quoted social commentator Santosh Desai. “Indians have always been generous people. Corporations can take a lead from Tata [India’s largest business group] who have institutionalized philanthropy, making it an act of corporate social responsibility and not charity.”*

*An insert calculated that if India’s 100 richest individuals took up The Giving Pledge, a total of over 250 billion dollars—a quarter of the Indian GDP—would be raised. It’s hard to grasp those kinds of figures, or to imagine ourselves in the position to be so generous. The wealthy can afford to give, while we sometimes struggle to make ends meet. But where there is a will, there is a way. For example:*

*A 24-year-old London man named Jack Diamond biked through India for two weeks to raise funds for a Goa-based charity that helps street and slum children like those he had gotten to know on a previous visit. “It never crossed my mind to do something like this before,” he explained, “but I wanted to make a difference.”*

I’m not suggesting you bike across your country to raise money. This is, however, an example of *where there is a will there is a way*. There are many creative ways to give, even when we don’t have much cash ourselves. See what you can come up with.

## The Geode



### Quote of the day:

“Since you are like no other being ever created since the beginning of time, you are incomparable.” — Brenda Ueland

### Think about it:

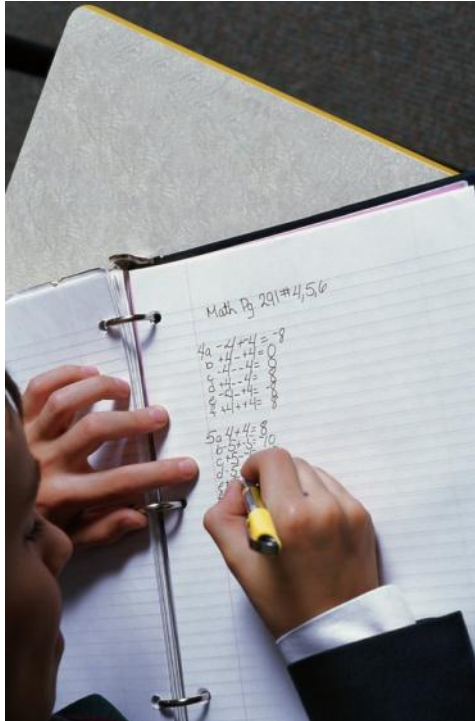
Every person has an inner beauty, a touch of the divine. Just because you don't see it at first glance doesn't mean it isn't there. Wherever you are and whoever you are, there are treasures right in front of you. Don't be fooled by appearances.

*Consider the geode. Outwardly a geode is just a rock and is usually found lying around with other rocks in some desert place. Its name comes from the Greek word geoides, which means earthy. It looks just like the rest of the earth that surrounds it, but to the trained eye, it is no ordinary rock. The gem hunter or geologist knows that inside that rock is a wonder of nature that, when the rock is carefully split open, will take your breath away.*

*The expert will carefully saw the rock in two to reveal the dazzling crystals inside, such as the purple amethyst. He is often not quite sure what he will find, but with eager anticipation he skillfully goes about his job and is rewarded by being the first to see the wonder that lies within.*

Will you look for beauty in others today? It might take some careful work to get through the stony surface, but there's no telling what beauty you will uncover!

## Count Your Blessings



### Quote of the day:

“The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.” — Eric Hoffer

### Think about it:

The path to victory and miracles comes through praise, thankfulness, gratefulness, gratitude, or whatever you want to call it. No matter what you call it, by practicing it you will get the same results, because this is a law of the spirit.

Gratitude will lift your own spirit. As you dwell on the good and speak of the good, then good surrounds you. Even if you are thankful when you don't feel like it, it lifts you up and soon you will feel like it. Having a grateful attitude is always blessed and rewarded.

And the big bonus is—having a thankful attitude helps those around you. When you demonstrate your thankfulness, it lifts others spirits, encourages them and engenders positiveness.

Before going to bed think of at least five things you are thankful for. Continue this every night with a different five things each time and you will be amazed at how your life will change.

## The Two Twins



### Quote of the day:

"It is possible to give away and become richer. It is also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything." — Hebrew Proverb

### Think about it:

The following legend is something to think about. Although a legend, it conveys a profound truth.

*There was once an abbey which had a very generous abbot. No beggar was ever turned away and he gave all he could to the needy. The strange thing was that the more he gave away, the richer the abbey seemed to become.*

*When the old abbot died, he was replaced by a new one with exactly the opposite nature—he was mean and stingy.*

*One day an elderly man arrived at the monastery saying that he had stayed there years before and was seeking shelter again. The abbot turned the visitor away, saying the abbey could no longer afford its former hospitality.*

*"Our monastery cannot provide for strangers like it used to when we were wealthy," he said. "No one seems to make gifts towards our work nowadays."*

*"Ah, well," said the stranger, "I think that is because you banished two brothers from the monastery."*

*"I don't think we ever did that," said the puzzled abbot.*

*"Oh, yes," was the reply. "They were twins. One was called 'Give' and the other, 'It shall be given unto you.' You banished 'Give', so his brother decided to go as well."*

Moral of the story: The more you give away the more you will receive.

## Misfortune or Good Fortune?



### Quote of the day:

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant." — Robert Louis Stevenson

### Think about it:

*There was a poor, old man who lived in a small village. He owned a beautiful white horse. Kings offered fabulous prices for the horse, but the man would say, "This horse is my friend." The man was poor, but he never sold the horse.*

*One morning he found the horse was gone from the stable. The whole village gathered and said, "You foolish old man! We knew someday the horse would be stolen. You should have sold it. What a misfortune!"*

*The old man replied, "That's not necessarily true. The horse is simply not in the stable. This is the fact. Everything else is a judgment. Who knows if it is a misfortune or a blessing?"*

*People laughed at the old man. They knew he was a little crazy. After fifteen days, the horse suddenly returned. He had not been stolen, but had gone visiting. Not only that, a dozen wild horses returned with him. Again the people gathered and said, "Old man, you were right. The disappearance of your horse is not a misfortune. It has indeed proved to be a blessing."*

*The old man said, "Again you are going too far. Just say the horse came back. Who knows whether its return is a blessing or not?"*

*The people did not say much, but they knew he was wrong. After all, twelve beautiful horses had come. The old man's only son started to train the wild horses. But a week later he fell from a horse and broke his legs. The people gathered and again they judged. "You're right! Getting twelve horses was a misfortune. Your son, who is your only support, has lost the use of his legs. Now you are poorer than ever."*

*The old man said, "You are obsessed with judgment. Only say my son has broken his legs. Nobody knows whether this is a misfortune or a blessing. Life comes in fragments and more is never revealed."*

*After a few weeks the country went to war. All the young men in town were forced into the military. Only the old man's son was left, because he was crippled. The whole town cried because they knew most of the young men would never return. They said to the old man, "You were right. This is a blessing. Your son may be crippled, but he is still with you. Our sons are gone forever."*

*The old man said again, "Nobody knows! Say only this: Your sons have entered the army and my son has not. We can't know whether it is a blessing or a misfortune. Stop judging or you will always be obsessed with fragments and live in faulty conclusions."*

We never know if a situation will bring forth a misfortune or blessing. So let us take a lesson from the old man and wait for the outcome before judging a situation.

## A Pocket Full Of Love



### Quote of the day:

“Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words while their ears can hear them and while their hearts can be thrilled by them.” — Henry Ward Beecher

### Think about it:

Each day we have an opportunity to send messages of love. It could be very direct messages like saying "I love you" that we might speak to those closest to us, or more subtle messages, like smiling at a stranger.

To make full use of this opportunity, imagine that each morning you are given a pocketful of love to share with others throughout the day. Your mission is to empty this pocket daily. How are you going to go about it? When and where will you fill their lives with sweetness? To whom will you speak approving, cheering words? Why not start now? What's stopping you?

No matter what your situation or how you go about it, as you empty your pocket of love, notice how good it makes you feel too!



## Two Frogs



### Quote of the day:

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

When I fall into some sort of difficulty I not only remember these words from Einstein, but the story of the two frogs told in rhyme by T.C. Hamlet, also comes to mind.

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,  
Or so I've heard it told;  
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,  
The cream was deep and cold.  
"Oh, what's the use?" croaked number one.  
"Tis fate; no help's around.  
Goodbye, my friend! Goodbye, sad world!"  
And weeping still, he drowned.  
But number two, of sterner stuff,  
Dog-paddled in surprise.  
While he wiped his creamy face  
And dried his creamy eyes.  
"I'll swim awhile, at least," he said--  
Or so I've heard he said;  
"It really wouldn't help the world  
If one more frog were dead."  
An hour or two he kicked and swam,  
Not once he stopped to mutter,  
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked.  
Then hopped out, via butter!  
--T.C. Hamlet

Do you find yourself at times drowning in "cream"? If so, do you turn your creamy troubles into butter and walk away from the mess?

## Depressed?



### Quote of the day:

"The best thing about giving of ourselves is that what we get is always better than what we give. The reaction is greater than the action." — Orison Swett Marden

### Think about it:

There is one healing tool that particularly stands out to me, and repeatedly comes up in my extensive research regarding that all-too-common human condition of extreme discouragement. I think this method is exceptional, because it is something that not only benefits the one implementing it, but also others. It's the simple act of giving to others in whatever way one can. The act of *giving* is known to improve mental, emotional, and physical health in measurable and sometimes profound ways.

Studies have been done by numerous institutes, such as the National Institute of Health, Harvard Business School, and the University of California, Berkeley, and published in such journals as the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*. One such study found that the areas in the brain that are activated by giving are the same as those that are activated by other positive stimuli—such as in response to sexual pleasure, monetary rewards, enjoying a meal, exercising and a number of other activities. Contributing in some way to help others, actually triggers the release of chemicals in the brain called endorphins, which are sometimes called “feel good” chemicals because they promote social bonding and a sense of belonging.

In another study a researcher found that this principle of reaching out to others had definite, positive benefits for the one reaching out. This applied to people suffering from a wide-range of conditions, including depression, chronic pain, and AIDS. As she expressed it, "When humans help others regardless of a shared condition, they appear to live longer and happier lives."

In another study, Paul Arnstein of Boston College and his colleagues evaluated the effects of volunteering on chronic pain patients. Their findings show that pain, depression, and disability consistently decreased after volunteering. One researcher discovered some unexpected results in her study of a group of long-term sufferers of multiple sclerosis that made phone calls to encourage others suffering from the same affliction. While their calls had some benefits for the recipients, the greatest beneficiaries were those initiating the calls, and who were lending a supportive ear to others. In fact, those who offered support experienced dramatic improvements in their quality of life, several times greater than those they were helping.

If you suffer from discouragement or depression why not try giving to others.

## You Are In the Crafting Process



### Quote of the day:

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

When life is just plain hard, remember you are in the crafting process.

Life is like a sculptor and you are like the marble. A block of marble may not look like much or be worth much in its rough form, but it has potential. It takes quite a bit of hammering and chiseling to create a thing of beauty from that piece of rock. The chisel is sharp, the blows are hard, and it's not an altogether pleasant process for the marble, but the finished product is worth it.

No one benefits much from easy times. Such times are enjoyable and everyone wishes they could last forever, but they don't contribute much to one's character. So when troubles come into your life, don't be discouraged or resentful. Instead, know that there is a plan and a reason that is crafting you into a thing of beauty.

It is hard to imagine this when you are a work in progress. But if you can endure the crafting process, when the sculptor's work is done, you will behold and be pleased with the result—a masterpiece, the thing of beauty that is your life.

## Disappointments



### Quote of the day:

"In every tear a rainbow hides, but only when the sunshine falls upon the crystal drop is the splendor revealed. —  
J.R. Miller

### Think about it:

Many of us find ourselves living in uncongenial conditions in which we must stay, at least for the time being but, whatever the circumstances, we can live an honorable life. It makes no difference what situation we find ourselves in; there is always room to grow. Restraints, when used correctly, only help to make our life more earnest and beautiful.

*Just like musical string instruments, it is because the strings are tied at both ends, and must vibrate in limited measure of distance, that music comes forth. Cut the string(s), and let it fly loose, and it no longer gives out musical notes. The melody depends upon the restraints.*

So it is with many human lives; they become capable of giving out sweet notes, only when they are compelled to move in restraint such as misfortune, adversity, or sorrow. The very difficulty in our situation is what brings out the best qualities in us, and produces the finest results in character and achievement.

Remember this, and make sweet music out of your adversity.

## Live Without Worry



### Quote of the day:

“Never bear more than one trouble at a time. Some people bear three kinds—all they have had, all they have now, and all they expect to have.” — Edward Everett Hale

### Think about it:

If we could learn the lesson “live without worry” we will have mastered life, and thus will be a ready to live more productively and effectively.

I read somewhere that the electro-dynamo is almost perfect in its conservation of energy. Ninety-five percent of the energy force it generates is utilized going into light or power. Only five percent is wasted.

If we could learn to live as such, so that only five percent of our energy is expended in friction or needless wasted energy, we will have learned indeed, in one sense at least, to make the most of our life. Many of us have not learned to live in this economical way. We often waste energy in anxious care when what we ought to focus our energy towards is to lighten the world with peace, or helping to strengthen others. Nothing wastes life's energies more rapidly and more needlessly, than worry.

Take a lesson from the electro-dynamo and use your energy on more productive things than worry.

## Exercise for Boosting Self-Esteem



### Quote of the day:

“A man has to live with himself, and he should see to it that he always has good company.” — Charles Evans Hughes

### Think about it:

I read a report somewhere which said that “over 85% of us experience low self-esteem. For many, their overall self-esteem is at a low point, but more often, for most people, poor self-esteem occurs in certain situations and settings.”

Since our level of self-esteem is the primary determining factor that influences our behavior, I was wondering what the other 15% do that shields them from low self-esteem. From my personal experiences and research, I would say it has to do with attitude and being aware of one's negative self-chatter and aggressively combating it.

Here is an exercise to try in order to boost your appreciation of yourself. Each time you look into a mirror, say to yourself, “I love you (fill in your name). I really, really love you. You look so beautiful/handsome and you have the best smile. You are my ideal woman/man and I love you dearly.”



## Retaliation or Resolution



### Quote of the day:

“We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive.” — Chuck Swindoll

### Think about it:

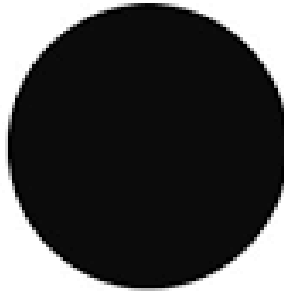
Whenever we are hurt by someone, we have a choice to make: Will you use your energy and emotions for retaliation or for resolution? You can't do both.

Many people are reluctant to show mercy because they don't understand the difference between trust and forgiveness. Forgiveness is letting go of the past. Trust has to do with future behavior. Forgiveness must be immediate, whether or not a person asks for it.

Trust must be rebuilt over time. Trust requires a track record. If someone hurts you repeatedly, you are to forgive them instantly, but you are not expected to trust them immediately, and you are not expected to continue allowing them to hurt you. They must prove they have changed over time.

The bottom line is you don't have to trust someone to forgive them. Is there someone you need to separate the trust issue from the forgiveness issue?

## The Black Dot



### Quote of the day:

“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.” — Epictetus

### Think about it:

*One day, a professor entered the classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They all waited anxiously at their desks for the exam to begin. The professor handed out the exams with the text facing down, as usual. Once he handed them all out. He asked the students to turn the papers over. To everyone’s surprise, there were no questions just a black dot in the center of the sheet of paper.*

*The professor then told them he wanted them to write about what they had seen there. At the end of the class the professor took all the exams and started reading each one out loud in front to the students. All of them without exception wrote about the black dot, trying to explain its position in the center or defining the dot, etc.*

*After all had been read the professor explained. “I’m not going to grade you on this. I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot and the same happens in our lives.*

*We have a white piece of paper to observe and enjoy, but we always focus on the dark spots. We have many blessings and have many reasons to celebrate every day. However, we mainly focus on the dark spots, the lacks, such as health issues that bother us, lack of money, complicated relationships, disappointments and the list goes on. The dark spots are very small when compared to everything we have in our lives, but they are the ones that pollute our mind.*

Take your eyes away from the black dot in your life and enjoy the blessings of each moment that life gives you. Be happy and live life filled with thankfulness.

## Durian



### Quote of the day:

“A true friend knows your weaknesses but shows you your strengths; feels your fears but fortifies your faith; sees your anxieties but frees your spirit; recognizes your disabilities but emphasizes your possibilities.” — William Arthur Ward

### Think about it:

I lived in South East Asia for many years. You can find many exotic and interesting things there, one of which is a fruit called *durian*. For those of you who don't know what a durian is, it is a delicious savory fruit. Durian has, however, a thick, prickly outer cover and a very distinct pungent smell.

Seeing the good and possibilities in others can be likened to loving durian. Durian is an acquired taste, and yet there are people fanatically dedicated to durian.

What makes people crave a fruit like durian? What makes them elevate it to a "king of fruits" status? Why do they light up when they see clumps of those prickly, greenish-brown husks hanging liberally from vendor stalls? How do they get past the pungent, even revolting odor? What makes them fight their way through the thick, prickly outer husk in order to reach the inside? What makes them obsessed with this fruit that smells like—as some people describe it—dirty socks?

They've fallen in love with what's inside those prickly green husks. They've made it past the prickly outer shell, past the foul smell, and they have tasted the exquisite center.

Loving people and seeing the good and possibilities in others can sometimes be similar to getting to the heart of a durian. People can sometimes be prickly. They can have thick, crusty outer shells. Their presence can sometimes repel rather than attract. People can sometimes be stinky—when they do and say unpleasant things. But to the true *people-lover*, those barriers and obstacles merely add to the challenge and excitement of reaching that heart of gold—that sweet center of the inner person that you know is there. If it were any easier to get close to people, some of the excitement would be lost, and some of the allure of the adventure would be missing.

Anyone who has reached inside another's heart, and who has seen what lies beneath the often crusty, prickly shell, has seen the soft and often hurting center. Within that center lies great potential. Within that center lies good. Within that center lies possibility that just needs to be believed in and highlighted.

Once you have touched the heart of someone, and then someone else, and then someone else, you start to see that beneath all the layers and tough exterior, everyone has that special place inside that needs to be loved, that needs to be believed in, that needs to be encouraged and appreciated.

People need passionate and dedicated friends and family who love them, who know that there is good and possibility deep inside of them, and who will do anything to reach that beautiful core. Are you that friend?

## Two Wolves



### Quote of the day:

"Nobody can bring you peace but yourself." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

In a story from Native American folklore, a grandfather explains to his young grandson the inner struggle between good and evil.

*"A battle goes on inside all of us," the grandfather begins. "It is a battle between two wolves. One wolf is the embodiment of everything evil, like hate, anger, jealousy, resentment, greed, arrogance, lying, and selfishness. The other wolf is the embodiment of everything good, like love, joy, peace, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, empathy, generosity, compassion, truth, and faith."*

*The grandson thinks about those words and then asks, "Which wolf wins?"*

*The grandfather replies, "The one you feed."*

How can you tell these two wolves apart so you'll know which to feed? Whenever you have a thought that causes you to feel discontent, critical, bitter, or unhappy you can be sure it's the *wrong* wolf stalking his prey. Don't be his next meal! Feed the *other* one instead by filling your mind with positive, encouraging, uplifting, grateful thoughts. This is key to a happier, more upbeat, and more successful you.

You may not be able to stop the evil wolf from coming around, but if you're smart you won't wait till he does to start feeding the good wolf. Remember, the more you feed the good wolf, the stronger he will grow. Feed him on a daily basis, every chance you get, and the evil wolf will be no match for him. When it comes to a showdown, the evil wolf will turn tail and run every time.

## The Beekeeper



### Quote of the day:

“When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.”  
— Henry Ford

### Think about it:

I buy delicious wild raw honey in the area where I live. A beekeeper told me a story once that reminds me of this quote.

*When the little bee is in the first stage, it is put into a hexagonal cell, and enough honey is stored there for its use until it reaches maturity. The honey is sealed with a capsule of wax, and when the tiny bee has fed itself on the honey and exhausted the supply, the time has come for it to emerge out into the open. But, oh, the struggle, the straining to get through that wax! It is the strait gate for the bee, so strait that in the agony of exit the bee rubs off the membrane that hid its wings, and on the other side is able to fly!*

I don't know about you but I sometimes feel like that bee when I am struggling to break free from my confinement of troubles and be free to fly. Although it is a struggle for the bee the great effort is necessary in order to rub off the membrane of its wings, otherwise he would not be able to fly. So when I find myself under pressure I remind myself that it is a necessary part of life, and without it I won't be able to fly. Adversity is the thing that makes it possible for me to fly just as the wind against the airplane makes it possible to take off.

## Kiss That Frog



### Quote of the day:

"Sometimes it's not the pain that makes you suffer it's your own negative thoughts that make things seem worse." – Author Unknown

### Think about it:

*Once upon a time there was a little girl who spent her days sitting beside a pond, watching a frog on a lily pad. The little girl knew that the frog was probably a prince, and the frog—who was indeed a prince—knew that the little girl could kiss his nose and break the magic spell that a wicked witch had cast on him. But the little girl on the bank of the pond was too shy to begin a conversation with the frog, and the frog simply could not bring himself to tell her how badly he wanted her to kiss him. So the little girl went on sitting there, watching the frog. And that is the end of the story.*

Sadly, this sort of thing happens all the time in real life. Think of all the beautiful relationships that could have blossomed but never did, the Romeos that never embraced their Juliets because both of them were too afraid to make the first move. No one wants to be met by a cold stare of rejection, but if you spend your life listening to your own negative self chatter and trying to avoid rejection, you will never accomplish much or get very far in life.

Some people are naturally open and can talk a blue streak, while others are more introverted, withdrawn, and reticent and suffer from negative self-chatter. They don't want to be that way. They would like to be able to interact with others more freely, but it is very hard for them to break away from their negative thoughts about themselves or what might happen.

Don't be like the couple in the story. Combat your negative thoughts and step out. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.



## Grandma's Cake



### Quote of the day:

"Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward." —Vernon Law

### Think about it:

*A little boy was telling his Grandma how "everything" is going wrong, at school, family problems, and severe health problems in the family. Meanwhile, Grandma is baking a cake. She asks her grandson if he would like a snack, which of course he does.*

*"Here, have some cooking oil," she says.*

*"Yuck" says the boy.*

*"Then how about a couple raw eggs?"*

*"Gross, Grandma!" he replies.*

*"Would you prefer some flour then? Or maybe some baking soda?" she asks.*

*"Grandma, those are all yucky!" he replied.*

*To which Grandma replies: "Yes, all those things seem to taste bad all by themselves. But when they are mixed together in the right amounts and the right manner, they make a delicious cake!"*

*She continued, "God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!"*

Let's take some advice from Grandma and trust things will work for good.

## Crisis = Opportunity

# CRISIS



**Danger**



**Opportunity**

### Quote of the day:

“When written in Chinese the word “crisis” is composed of two characters - one represents danger and the other represents opportunity.” — John F. Kennedy

### Think about it:

When you make a mistake or fail at something you consider it a crisis that is the time to remember the two Chinese characters that make up the word--danger and opportunity. There is always a risk in every opportunity and many opportunities come from mistakes but if you don't take the time to see it you may miss it. Such is the story of James Wright and Peter Hodgson.

*During World War II, the United States government needed rubber for airplane and truck tires, boots for soldiers, and many other uses. Rubber was difficult to get during the war because rubber came from trees that grew in Africa. Since silicon was so available, the government asked many different large companies to have their engineers try to make a rubber substitute out of silicon.*

*At General Electric, in 1944, one of the engineers working with the silicon experiments was James Wright. One day he was running a test on silicon oil where he added boric acid to the oil. At the end of the test the result was a gooey blob that bounced. Unfortunately, this blob had no real use. Samples of it were sent to engineers all over the world, but no one could find any use for it, so it was forgotten about.*

*Four years after the war ended, in 1949, a man by the name of Peter Hodgson thought of a use. The goo could stretch and bounce and if you pressed it against the newspaper comics, it picked up the pictures and letters. Peter decided the goo made a great toy, so he borrowed \$147 to start his business, placed the goo into plastic eggs and called it "Silly Putty."*

If James Wright had seen his mistake as an opportunity rather than a mistake he might have come up with the toy instead of Peter Hodgson. What opportunities are you missing?

## Negative Self-chatter



### Quote of the day:

“What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow.” — Buddha

### Think about it:

We've all seen cartoons that portray a person at a point of decision with a guardian angel on one shoulder and a little devil on the other, each trying to persuade the person to do or not do this or that. The message is simple, clear, and often amusing, but what we sometimes fail to realize is that there is also an element of truth in these caricatures.

In the coaching world the little devil trying to persuade you to “not do this or that” is referred to as your limiting beliefs, or negative self-chatter. We all have these two voices trying to influence us: one encourages us to do good, to be encouraged, to affirm our self-worth, and the other is constantly trying to pull us down.

Don't let the negative self-chatter pull you down but stay on the attack against negative influences by keeping your mind and thoughts full of positive uplifting thoughts.

## Grandma's Glasses



### Quote of the day:

"Into the hands of every individual is given a marvelous power for good or evil—the silent, unconscious, unseen influence of his life." — William George Jordan

### Think about it:

Whether you realize it or not, your life will make an impression on a lot of people before you die.

This impression may be positive or negative. Therefore, it is up to you to decide the kind of difference you want to make in the lives of those you touch. Will you be a positive or a negative influence? Will you build up or tear down? Will you be loving and encouraging or critical and condemning? Will you be a burden or a blessing to others?

It is interesting how we all influence others for good or bad. I liked this little story that has a profound impression.

*A small boy was caught trying on his Grandmother's glasses. When asked by his mother why, he replied, "I want to wear glasses like Grandma's because she can see much more than other people. She can see when folks are hungry and tired or sorry, and she can even see what will make them feel better. She can see what they meant to do, even if they didn't do it right. She can see when they are going to cry, and she can see how to get them smiling again. I asked her one day how she could see so good, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things as she got older. So when I get older, I want a pair of glasses just like Grandma's, so I can see as good as that, too."*

What a wonderful influence she had on her grandchild and not only him but on me. I hope that when people view my life they are influenced as favorably. Like George Eliot says, "Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another."

## Harry Potter



### Quote of the day:

“When you reach for the stars, you may not quite get one, but you won’t come up with a handful of mud either.” — Leo Burnett

### Think about it:

Theresa Koltes sent me this post to share with you.

*We all have an idea. Maybe your idea is just a baby dream. Maybe a couple of stars kept in a jar, afraid to break free. But consider those people who let the baby walk, or who open the jar and let the stars out so they can fly. What happened to them?*

*When I think of people who turned their stars into something extraordinary, I think of people like J.K. Rowling, the authoress of the novel series, Harry Potter. She didn’t start out easy. After a difficult and painful divorce, she struggled as a single mom, living off of welfare benefits in an apartment rampant with mice.*

*But what is extraordinary is that someone surviving off of the government can go on to be an award winning novelist and one of the richest people in the world. J.K. Rowling is acclaimed as one of the five self-made female billionaires. Harry Potter is now a global, worth \$15 billion, and has sold 350 million copies in 55 languages.*

*Once upon a time, when Rowling was a child, she wanted to be a writer. But she received little support from those around her—her parents thought that studying French was more useful than English and writing. Her childhood friend was the only one who told her she was destined to be a successful writer, and she chose to believe it.*

*One day as she was on the train from London to Manchester, the story began unfolding in her mind. The train was delayed for a few hours, and bit by bit the details, characters and plot of the unborn Harry Potter danced into her imagination. It took Rowling a year to complete the book and find a publisher. It was five more years before the first book was finally published.*

*But within only a few weeks of publishing, the book went wild. She received a grant from the Scottish Arts Council, which enabled her to quit her job and write fulltime. Two years later, Warner Bros secured the film rights for the books with a seven figure estimate, delivering the books into film succession.*

*Today Harry Potter is one of the most known media products worldwide. And it all started with one thought, one idea, one ambition.*

Take your stars out of the jar and lay them out. Who knows where they will fly to?

## Giving Makes You Stronger



### Quote of the day:

“Giving is the highest expression of potency. In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy. I experience myself as overflowing, spending, alive, hence as joyous. Giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is a deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness.” — Erich Fromm

### Think about it:

I think this is an interesting quote, and to go along with it I read an interesting study about how the benefits of giving make you stronger. The study said:

*The Journal of Social Psychological and Personality Science, published research involving two studies which compared moral behavior and physical strength. In the first, participants were given a dollar note and told either to keep it or to donate it to charity. They were then asked to hold up a 5 pound weight for as long as they could. Those who donated to charity could hold the weight up for almost 10 seconds longer on average.*

*In a second study, participants held a weight while writing fictional stories of themselves either helping another, harming another, or doing something that had no impact on others. As before, those who thought about doing good were significantly stronger than those whose actions did not benefit other people.*

Are you showing and/or improving your strength by giving?



## Self Talk



### Quote of the day:

“Every thought is a seed. If you plant crab apples, don't count on harvesting Golden Delicious.” — Bill Meyer

### Think about it:

How true! Stop a minute and think about this quote and consider what kind of “thought seeds” you are planting.

Every day we all have thousands of conversations with ourselves--some good and some not so good. If your “self talk” --what you say to yourself in your heart and mind, is uplifting, if you appreciate your good qualities, this is good, and will keep you in a positive mode. But, if your “self talk” is belittling and you're beating yourself up over your not so good qualities, then your self-chatter is not serving you well and it is time to start paying more attention to how and what you talk to yourself about.

Did you know you become what you think? If you are thinking good things about yourself, then you will become those thoughts. However, the opposite is also true. I know that we don't want to become proud or to think more highly of ourselves than we should but I am more and more convinced that putting ourselves down is more damaging. So plant good seeds about yourself and grow into a person of character.

Take time to think about your self-talk. What sort of seeds are you planting?

## The Primrose Fable



### Quote of the day:

“Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn whatever state I may be in, therein to be content.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

There is no haphazardness in this world. Every tree, flower and plant is placed in just the right spot. One tree grows best in the sheltered valley, another by the water's edge, another on the bleak mountain-top swept by storms. Every tree or plant is found in the location where the conditions for its growth are best. And so it is with us as well.

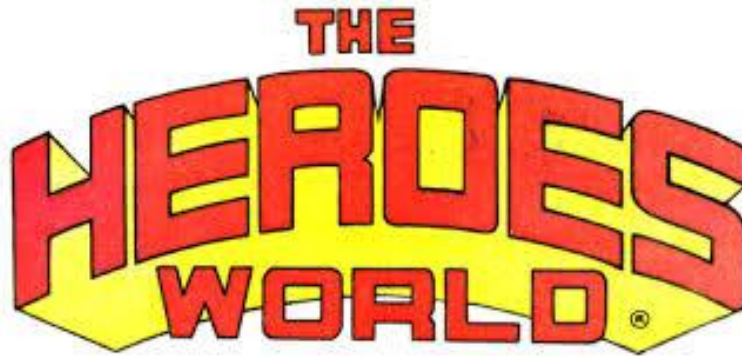
*There is a little fable which says that a primrose growing by itself in a shady corner of the garden, became discontented as it saw the other flowers in their mirthful beds in the sunshine, and begged to be moved to a more conspicuous place.*

*Its prayer was granted. The gardener transplanted it to a more showy and sunny spot. It was greatly pleased—but there came a change over it immediately. Its blossoms lost much of their beauty and became pale and sickly. The hot sun caused them to faint and wither. So it prayed again to be taken back to its old place in the shade.*

Although we all have different experiences in life, wherever we may find ourselves it is the right place to be and the perfect place to grow into our potential. Some of us require the *fierce storms*, some will only thrive in the shadow of *worldly adversity*, and some come to ripeness more sweetly under the soft and gentle influences of prosperity.

Don't bemoan your lot in life, but use whatever situation and experiences you find yourself in to grow and blossom.

**“I knew I could make a difference to one person.”**



**Quote of the day:**

“He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.” — Phillip James Bailey

**Think about it:**

I was impressed by this story of a man who just saw a need and did what he could. He definitely lives up to Mr. Bailey’s quote.

*On a cold, snowy day in Washington D.C., amid the debris of a tragic plane crash in the Potomac River, a real-life hero emerged from obscurity. Flying too low, Air Florida's Flight 90 had crashed into the 14th Street Bridge, catapulting plane, baggage and terrified passengers into the freezing water.*

*A flight attendant was floating in the icy current doing everything she could to stay alive. Someone on shore threw her a rope, but she could not grab it. She went under and popped back up, waving her hands and screaming for help. For a second time she went under, this time for much longer. Wide-eyed, scrambling and gasping for breath, she finally came up for one more attempt to save her life.*

*A shy, unassuming man named Vinnie Skutnick was standing on the bridge watching the tragedy. Believing that he could make a difference, he quickly removed his heavy overcoat, kicked off his boots and dove into the sub-freezing river. Swimming like an Olympian, Skutnick found the flight attendant, lifted her head and shoulders out of the water, and whispered, "You will live."*

*As he pulled her from the river, Skutnick was asked why he risked his life to save the stranger. He replied, "I couldn't save everybody, but I knew I could make a difference to one person."*

Random acts of kindness *do* make a significant difference.

## Be an "I-feel-great" Person



### Quote of the day:

"The more man meditates upon good thoughts, the better will be his world and the world at large." — Confucius

### Think about it:

You and I have been in many situations when someone burst in to the room and said, "I've got news." Immediately this person receives the full attention of everyone present. The point is, sometimes the news they bring *is* good, and yet, sometimes it's negative. So, I challenge you to think twice before passing on "the news". Pass on good news. Good news does more than merely get attention; good news brings good results. Good news results in enthusiasm. Good news even promotes good digestion.

Just because there are more broadcasters of bad news than there are of good news, don't be misled. No one ever won a friend, no one ever made money, and no one ever accomplished anything good by broadcasting bad news. It's pointless to pass on the bad. Make it a habit to always speak positively!

Broadcast good news about life, about others, about situations, about how you feel. Be an "I-feel-great" person. Simply say, "I feel great" at every possible opportunity. If you do, you will feel better. By the same token, telling people, "I feel awful," I guarantee, will make you feel just that—awful! How we *feel* is, in large part, is determined by how we *think* we feel.

Why not determine to be a transmitter of good news? Tell everyone the *good* that happened today. Encourage others—compliment them at every opportunity. Tell them about the positive things that are happening. Recall the amusing, pleasant things you experienced and let the unpleasant things stay buried. Spread good news!

## Half Of What He Owned



### Quote of the day:

“There was a man, though some did think him mad, the more he cast away, the more he had.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

I read a story sent in from a reader of the Bits and Pieces magazine about the unselfish giving of a five year old. It so touched my heart that it caused me to stop and think about my own practice of giving.

*In a kindergarten class the teacher and children had been discussing what had happened in the 9/11 incident and how some children had lost their parents. One five year old felt very sad for them and wanted to do something nice to cheer them up and so took half of his savings out of his piggy bank and gave it to his teacher. He asked her to buy toys for those children to brighten their day. The teacher was so overwhelmed that she began to cry. Although his contribution only totaled \$15.50, yet to him it was half of everything he owned.*

What a great example of unselfish giving. It's hard to imagine giving half of what I own for total strangers to cheer them up but that is what this child did. This little boy's example of love and giving gave me courage to give more to others in need and not to worry so much about the consequences.

Are the evils of this world preventing love, compassion, and kindness from flowing into your thoughts and deeds? If so, take heart by the caring and loving example of this five year old.



## Keeper of the Stream



### Quote of the day:

"Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things. I am tempted to think there are no little things." — Bruce Barton

### Think about it:

Each of us has our place to fill and we are all important no matter what others may think. I hope this story encourages you to know just how important you are.

*The story of the keeper of the spring is about a quiet forest dweller who lived high above an Austrian village along the eastern slope of the Alps. The old gentleman had been hired many years earlier by a young town councilman to clear away the debris from the pools of water up in the mountain crevices that fed the lovely spring flowing through their town. With faithful, silent regularity, he patrolled the hills, removed the leaves and branches, and wiped away the silt that would otherwise have choked and contaminated the fresh flow of water. The village soon became a popular attraction for vacationers. Graceful swans floated along the crystal clear spring, the mill wheels of various businesses located near the water turned day and night, farmlands were naturally irrigated, and the view from restaurants was picturesque beyond description.*

*Years passed. One evening the town council met for its semiannual meeting. As they reviewed the budget, one man's eye caught the salary figure being paid the obscure keeper of the spring. Said the keeper of the purse, "Who is the old man? Why do we keep him on year after year? No one ever sees him. For all we know, the strange ranger of the hills is doing us no good. He isn't necessary any longer." By a unanimous vote, they dispensed with the old man's services. For several weeks, nothing changed.*

*By early autumn, the trees began to shed their leaves. Small branches snapped off and fell into the pools, hindering the rushing flow of sparkling water. One afternoon someone noticed a slight yellowish-brown tint in the spring. A few days later, the water was much darker. Within another week, a slimy film covered sections of the water along the banks, and a foul odor was soon detected. The mill wheels moved more slowly, some finally ground to a halt. Swans left, as did the tourists. Clammy fingers of disease and sickness reached deeply into the village.*

*Quickly, the embarrassed council called a special meeting. Realizing their gross error in judgment, they rehired the old keeper of the spring, and within a few weeks, the veritable river of life began to clear up. The wheels started to turn, and new life returned to the hamlet in the Alps.*

Never become discouraged with the seeming smallness of your task, job, or life. Cling fast to the words of Edward Everett Hale: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do." The key to accomplishment is believing that what you can do will make a difference.



## The Law of the Garbage Truck



### Quote of the day:

"Acceptance of what has happened is the first steps to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune." — William James

### Think about it:

I came upon this great story and wanted to share it with you.

*One day I hopped in a taxi to go to the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car pulled out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy and I mean, he was really friendly.*

*I asked, "Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and nearly sent us to the hospital!"*

*This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call, "The Law of the Garbage Truck."*

*He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it, and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets.*

The bottom line is to not let *garbage trucks* take over your day. Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets. Be thankful for the people who treat you right and pray for those who don't.

## Just One More Time



### Quote of the day:

"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn." — Harriet Beecher Stowe

### Think about it:

We have no idea whether the following story is true, but the message is powerful. It reportedly took place in 1942. According to the account:

*Rafael Solano was physically exhausted and defeated. As he sat on a boulder in the dry river bed he announced to his companions, "I'm through. There's no use going on any longer. See this pebble. It makes 999,999 I've picked up without finding one diamond. One more pebble makes a million, but what's the use? I quit!"*

*The exploration crew had spent months prospecting for diamonds in a Venezuelan watercourse. Their efforts focused on finding signs of valuable diamonds. Mentally, physically, and emotionally they were exhausted. Their clothes were tattered and their spirits weak.*

*"Pick up one more and make it a million," one man said. Solano consented and pulled forth a stone the size of a hen's egg. It was different than the others, and the crew soon realized they had discovered a diamond.*

*It is reported Harry Winston, a New York jewel dealer, paid Rafael Solano \$200,000 for that millionth pebble. The stone was named the Liberator and to date is the largest and purest diamond ever found.*

This story brings to mind the words of another famous character in history, Sir Winston Churchill, who said, "Never, ever, ever, ever, ever give up".

## Forgiveness Enlarges the Future



### Quote of the day:

“Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.” — Paul Boese

### Think about it:

*Tony Compal tells a story about President Clinton first meeting with Nelson Mandela. In his conversation with this great leader of South Africa, the president said, "When you were released from prison, Mr. Mandela, I woke my daughter at three o'clock in the morning. I wanted her to see this historic event. As you marched from the cellblock across the yard to the gate of the prison, the camera focused in on your face. I have never seen such anger, and even hatred, in any man as was expressed on your face at that time. That's not the Nelson Mandela I know today. What was that all about?"*

*Mandela answered, "I'm surprised that you saw that, and I regret that the cameras caught my anger. As I walked across the courtyard that day I thought to myself, "They've taken everything from you that matters. Your cause is dead. Your family is gone. Your friends have been killed. Now they're releasing you, but there's nothing left for you out-there. And I hated them for what they had taken from me. Then, I sensed an inner voice saying to me, `Nelson! For twenty-seven years you were their prisoner, but you were always a free man! Don't allow them to make you into a free man, only to turn you into their prisoner!"*

An unforgiving spirit creates bitterness in our souls and imprisons our spirits. Failure to forgive imprisons us. If Mandela can forgive so can you.

## Stick With Your Dreams



### Quote of the day:

“Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do.” — Ella Fitzgerald

### Think about it:

It's important to stick with your dreams no matter how crazy they may seem at the time. Just like Josephine Cochrane stuck to her dreams.

*Josephine Cochrane was a socialite, who, in 1886, had servants to wash her fine china. The servants were clumsy, though, and broke too many plates and cups. Josephine tried washing dishes herself, but it was a tiresome chore, and she thought to herself--there had to be a better way. She went out to a shed behind the house and started figuring out how to make a machine do the work.*

*She handled the transition from socialite to mechanic, but then faced a much harder task. Trying to sell her new machine, she constantly heard, “No.” In a 1915 survey, women insisted they'd rather wash dishes by hand in the evening because it relaxed them. Josephine patiently endured for decades before housewives were ready to have dishwashers in their kitchens.*

Today, dishwashers are a standard fixture in most American homes. I'm thankful she stuck to it.

What dreams do you need to stick to?

## I'm a "Will Be"



### Quote of the day:

"I am not a has-been. I am a will be." — Lauren Bacall

### Think about it:

Have you ever seen a flea circus—the classic sideshow event in which fleas are the performers? I haven't, but I do remember reading somewhere how fleas are trained.

*Fleas can jump extraordinarily high, relative to their tiny size. Training fleas involves putting them into a small box or jar. Without a lid, the fleas could easily jump out, so the flea trainer puts a lid in place and waits. Inside the container, the fleas jump up in order to escape. They hit the lid and fall back down. Again and again, the fleas will jump, hit the lid, and fall back.*

*Then, after some time, the fleas don't jump so high. They jump up almost as high as the lid, but not quite. Eventually, the trainer will remove the lid. The fleas could easily escape now, but they don't even try. They've become accustomed to only jumping to a certain height. They have more or less decided that's their limit; they are going as high as they can go, and they don't attempt anything further. Freedom is just a jump away, but it's a jump they don't make.*

I don't know if this is a true story or not, but it reminds me of how we sometimes allow ourselves to be limited by barriers that exist only in our minds. We tried and failed at something, and our confidence was shaken. The next time around, when an opportunity arose to try something new or bigger, we didn't rise to the challenge because we didn't think we were capable of doing it.

Life is full of new beginnings and fresh possibilities so don't let the lesson of the fleas be lost. Keep this word picture in your mind and don't let the setbacks or mistakes of the past hold you down like the nonexistent lid on the fleas' jar.

## Show Them The Way



### Quote of the day:

"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day, I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way." — Edgar A. Guest

### Think about it:

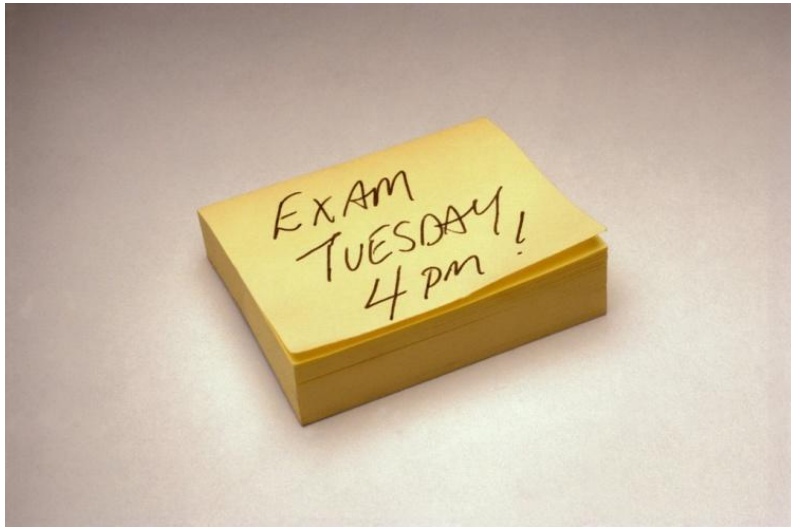
This quote reminds me of a personal story. When I was just starting off in my career, a veteran worker came up to me and asked me for something. I promptly began to explain to him where to find it, at which time he recited to me the above quote. It so convicted me that I immediately stopped what I was doing and showed him where he could find what he was looking for.

That one incident so impressed me that since that time whenever someone asks me for help I try to not only explain it, but actually show them the way or how to do it.

This simple act of kindness has served me well for many years, and will do the same for you.



## Post-It Notes



### Quote of the day:

“Just because something doesn't do what you planned it to do doesn't mean it's useless.” — Thomas A. Edison

### Think about it:

There are scores of stories about success resulting from seeming failures. One of my favorites, which goes along well with this quote, is the story behind the Post-It Note.

*In 1968, Spencer Silver was trying to develop a super strong adhesive for 3M laboratories however, instead he invented an adhesive that stuck to objects but could be easily lifted off, just the opposite of what he was trying to do.*

*One day, a colleague, Art Fry, saw a use for Silver's invention. He needed something to hold his page in his hymnbook, which his bookmarks kept falling out of. Adding the mild adhesive to paper bookmarks, the first Post-it Note was born and the rest is history.*

Spencer Silver had a plan for inventing something else, but even though his invention didn't turn out the way he had planned, it didn't mean it was useless. In fact, it has turned out to be a great success. The next time you feel like your plans have failed why not look a little deeper, it may not mean it's useless.

## Charlie Chaplin



### Quote of the day:

“You, the people have the power—the power to create happiness! You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure.” — Charlie Chaplin

### Think about it:

With the world in so much turmoil, it’s hard not to be overwhelmed by the almost-daily bad news of terrorism, disasters, violence, war, and human suffering. I sometimes feel my efforts are like a drop of water in a vast ocean of what needs to be done to truly help the world and make any difference at all.

*In the stirring speech by Charlie Chaplin’s character in his movie “The Great Dictator” he said,*

*“We all want to help one another. Human beings are like that. We want to live by each other’s happiness—not by each other’s misery. We don’t want to hate and despise one another. The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way.*

*“Greed has poisoned men’s souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical, our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery, we need humanity. More than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost.*

*“You, the people have the power—the power to create happiness! You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure.”*

The above-mentioned movie was produced in 1940. The message was true then, but how much *more* can we relate to this challenge today! I believe spreading peace on earth can work in much the same way. Changing the way you see others, being kind to those who cross your path, doing kind deeds when opportunities present themselves without expecting something in return. Sometimes it just takes a kind word or a helping hand when most needed, to show us what a beautiful world this can be.

## Phosphorescent Waters



### Quote of the day:

“I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.” — Mark Twain

### Think about it:

There is a story of a shipwreck, which yields a good illustration of the quote above:

*Crew and passengers had to leave the broken vessel and take to the life-boats. The sea was rough, and great care in rowing and steering was necessary in order to guard the heavily-laden boats, not from the ordinary waves, which they rode over easily—but from the great cross-seas. Night was approaching, and the hearts of all sank as they asked what they would do in the darkness—when they would no longer be able to see these terrible waves. To their great joy, however, when it grew dark they discovered that they were in phosphorescent waters, and that each dangerous wave rolled up crested with light which made it as clearly visible as if it were mid-day.*

So it is that life's dreaded experiences, when we meet them they carry the light which takes away the peril and the terror. The night of sorrow comes with its own lamp of comfort. The hour of weakness, brings its own secret of strength.

## Unconscious Helpfulness



### Quote of the day:

"A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love." — Saint Basil

### Think about it:

*A young woman, speaking of the way different people had been a comfort to her in a great sorrow, said, "I wish some people knew just how much their faces can comfort others."*

*Then she told of an old gentleman she sometimes sat beside in the subway. He did not know her—but she was always helped by just being near to him and seeing his face.*

There is a great deal of this *unconscious helpfulness* in the world. Indeed, many of the best things we do—we do without knowing we are doing them. If we are full of love, we will be helping others wherever we go; and the things we do not plan to do when we go out in the morning, will be the best things of the whole day.

Not only is the life of personal helpfulness most worthwhile in the measure of good it does, but in its influence upon *others*—no other life brings back to *itself* such rewards of peace, of strength, of comfort, of joy.

Does your unconscious helpfulness comfort others?

## Follow Your Dreams



### Quote of the day:

“Once you make a decision, the Universe conspires to make it happen.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

This is a touching story from *José Mourinho* of how one man followed his dreams and the results.

*“I had seen that man before and now he was sitting in the snow outside the stadium [in Madrid]. I asked him what he was doing there. He said he’d been there for five hours, hoping for a chance to see the game, but his money had run out. That’s when I knew I had to help.”*

*This is how José Mourinho, then coach for Real Madrid football (soccer) team, described his meeting with Abel Rodríguez, a Mexican- American who waxes floors in Los Angeles. Rodríguez had first met Mourinho in the U.S. several years earlier when Real was on a training campaign and needed a volunteer to carry water for the players. It wasn’t a paid task, but Rodríguez was happy to help, and that’s when he decided he had to see a real game. He saved money for the plane fare, flew out, and hoped for the best.—And it was “hope,” because he neither had a ticket for the match nor anywhere to stay.*

*It paid off. After their encounter, Mourinho put up Rodríguez in the same hotel as the players, all expenses paid. He proceeded to give him a paid job as kit man for an upcoming Champions League match against Manchester United, which meant Rodríguez flew with the team to England as a staff member.*

*“We must help each other to live our dreams,” said Mourinho.*

I’m not suggesting we recklessly do something rash to follow our dreams, however, if you put yourself out there the Universe often takes us up on our challenge.

## Sun Flowers



### Quote of the day:

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you can never see the shadow.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

Isn't it interesting how sunflowers always turn their face toward the sun? The fact is, they follow the sun across the sky. Experiment with it yourself. Position the sunflower away from the window and you will discover that in a short time the sunflower will resume its original position—facing toward the sun. With amazing persistence the sunflower will refuse to face the darkness. It will insist on ever looking toward the light.

Let's learn a lesson from the sunflower. Let's not allow ourselves to face toward the gloom and doom of life. Let's never sit down in the shadows of sorrow and let the night cast the dark shadows of gloom and despair upon us. Let's turn our faces toward the light. Adversity should serve to make us better and give us renewed skill and power; it should make our hearts softer, our spirits kinder, and give us a more gentle touch. Let's learn needed lessons, and then go on to experience new love and better service.

Stay positive like the sunflower. Turn away from negativity. Keep your chin up. Always look toward the positive.



## Count Your Blessings



### Quote of the day:

"You can't always change your situation, but you can always change your attitude." — Larry Hargraves

### Think about it:

Problems are part of life, and sometimes it seems that we can't get on top of them long enough to catch our breath. How can we overcome our problems before they overcome us?

This longing to be able to put aside all our problems and worries and to feel free is a longing everyone experiences at one time or another. Unfortunately, there is no magic bullet to make problems disappear at the bat of an eye. What we can do is learn to control the effect that our problems, both real and imaginary, have on us.

One sure-fire way is to adopt an attitude of praise and gratitude even in the rough times. No matter how badly things are going or how seemingly hopeless the situation, it is always possible to find something to be thankful for if you look hard enough.

That positive, appreciative attitude will lighten your burdens and help you bear them. Embracing a positive outlook no matter what is going on around you, brings on inspiration and renewed strength. It gives you wings to rise above your problems and the doubt, fear, and worry that accompany them. Maintaining an attitude of praise may not completely remove the problems you're facing, but it will give you a much better outlook and perspective on them.

## If He Had Only Known



### Quote of the day:

“Any man's life will be filled with constant and unexpected encouragement if he makes up his mind to do his level best each day.” — Booker T. Washington

### Think about it:

*An elderly carpenter was ready to retire and told his boss of his plans to leave and live a more leisurely life with his wife. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed a break. They could get by.*

*The contractor was sorry to see such a good worker go, and he asked the carpenter to build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter agreed, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.*

*When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said. “It is my gift to you.”*

If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done things another way, he would have given his best. So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often giving less than our best. Then we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we'd do it much differently. But we cannot go back. You are the carpenter of your life. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Your attitudes and the choices you make today, build your “house” for tomorrow. Build wisely!

## Ocean Liners



### Quote of the day:

"I keep the telephone of my mind open to peace, harmony, health, love, and abundance. Then whenever doubts, anxiety, or fear try to call me, they keep getting a busy signal--and soon they'll forget my number." — Edith Armstrong.

### Think about it:

This quote has such good advice and reminds me of what Dr. Osler said about ocean liners:

*"An ocean liner is built so that the captain can, by pressing a button, lower steel doors separating one watertight bulkhead from another. If the hull is pierced in a disaster, this keeps the ship afloat. In the voyage of life learn how to make doors come down and shut out the yesterdays with all their errors and failures. Learn also to lower another door to shut out the unborn tomorrows so that you can live for this day alone. As you move into the next bulkhead, close doors that will shut out both the past and the future."*

In both illustrations our part is to block out any negative input so that our mind stays clear and open to the positive keeping us on the path of growth. What negative input do you need to put a block on?

## Kill Them With Kindness



### Quote of the day:

“Lead the life that will make you kindly and friendly to everyone about you, and you will be surprised what a happy life you will lead.” — Charles M. Schwab

### Think about it:

Dealing with difficult people in the workplace can put a strain on your nerves and on your ability to perform in your job, especially when jealousy over position is a factor. But it doesn't have to be that way. It takes time to build relationships of mutual trust and respect, and you may have to work at it. As frustrated and threatened as you may feel, you can be sure that persistent kindness will pay off in the end. It's like the story of a man who moved into a community where a notoriously disagreeable and contentious old man lived.

*When the newcomer to the neighborhood was warned about the old man's temperament, he answered, "If he disturbs me, I will kill him!"*

*His statement reached the ears of his ill-tempered neighbor who had, in various ways, already begun to torment the new settler. But every offensive action was met with kindness until at last the cantankerous old man was overwhelmed by the kind words and deeds of his new neighbor.*

*As a new friendship began to blossom, the old man admitted, "I was told that you said you would kill me, but I didn't expect you to do it this way!"*

A soft answer can end an argument. A pleasant word can change the atmosphere. A dark disposition can literally be laid to rest by the kind expression on your face and warm tone in your voice. Kindness causes anger, bitterness, hatred, ill-will to fizzle out and can replace them with the desire to be likewise kind.

## An Invincible Host Against Difficulties



### Quote of the day:

“Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy shall form an invincible host against difficulties.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

Some say that happiness is what we make it and I tend to agree with that. I have a friend who works at a homeless shelter and he told me this story about a man who lived at the shelter.

*John has Parkinson’s disease and a deadly form of skin cancer. He could barely walk or get out of a chair by himself. Two surgeries stopped the cancer before it could spread, and medication and therapy are helping him deal with Parkinson’s.*

*Still, on a bad day there are very few things that he can do for himself. In spite of his troubles he is still positive and cheerful. He has a secret agenda: never leave anyone without a smile and in this he always succeeds. He learns everyone’s name, includes it in his cheery goodbye, and remembers it next time. He finds opportunities to build people up and is generous with compliments. He tells corny jokes. He pokes fun at himself—whatever it takes.*

*A lot of people, if they were in John’s position, would blame God or become bitter, but not John “That’s no way to live—and I’ve still got a lot of living to do,” he says.*

Let’s take a lesson from John, that no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in to choose to be positive and as the quote says it will “form an invincible host against difficulties”.

## Japanese Magazine



### Quote of the day:

"Gratitude is something of which none of us can give too much. For on the smiles, the thanks we give, our little gestures of appreciation, our neighbors build their philosophy of life." — A. J. Cronin

### Think about it:

I saw an interesting thing in a Japanese magazine. It was a picture of a butterfly. Its color was dull gray until warmed by someone's hand. The tender touch of someone's hand caused special inks in the printing to react. When touched by a human hand, the lack luster gray was transformed into the brilliant colors of the rainbow.

Often, this is how people are. In this hurting world people are hungry for a personal touch—the touch of someone who sincerely cares.

I'd like to encourage you to step out and try this exercise: Make a list of people you do not particularly feel drawn to. Show them acts of kindness and appreciation. Stand back and see what happens. See if they don't transform from *dull gray* into the vibrant colors of the rainbow.



## See the Goal Clearly



### Quote of the day:

“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.” — Henry Ford

### Think about it:

*At a full-contact karate meet the contestants were asked to break two 1-inch-thick boards to demonstrate their punching power. However, one contestant's boards didn't break, but his knuckle did.*

*He had practiced this routine before and we had seen him break one board of this thickness, but not two. We thought he might give up, but he didn't. On the third try he was successful.*

*Backstage he was asked what had gone wrong. He quickly replied, "I made a great mistake. Instead of looking through the boards at a point beyond, I looked at the boards. To do it right you have to imagine a point past the point of impact."*

This lesson is a good one for all of us. Look past the obstacles in life, not at them. We are only set back when we take our sights off the goal! As the contestant found out, reaching the goal may involve pain, even broken bones and broken dreams. How much better to see goals clearly, to make full contact with life, to break through every barrier and to not give up until you make your dream a reality.

## Hitting the Target



### Quote of the day:

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.” — Theodore Roosevelt

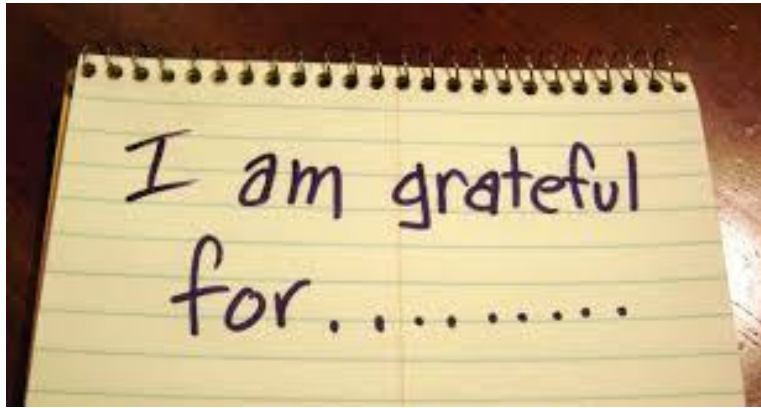
### Think about it:

If you have tried and failed at something at least it means you have tried. You have a goal and a purpose. You may not hit the target every time, but you will eventually have success because you are doing something. Those that don't try for fear of failure are never defeated, but they never win either.

Sometimes the things we most want seem to come with the most risk—the risk of rejection, disappointment, or failure. But if you play it safe, and never let your desire see the light of day, you often risk something even greater—the opportunity to experience the joy that comes from expressing your unique talents and gifts. And worse, by not taking the risk, you can be left with a haunting inner voice that will forever sing the song of "if I only had."

Consider taking the risk. It is better to have tried and failed than to have never tried at all.

## Attitude of Gratitude



### Quote of the day:

"Of all the attitudes we can acquire, surely the attitude of gratitude is the most important and by far the most life-changing." — Zig Ziglar

### Think about it:

You may say this is fine, but what about when bad things happen? The following story is one of my favorites, and this example is one that I try to follow when bad things happen to me.

*Matthew Henry, the famous scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary:*

*"Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."*

In every situation there is always something to be thankful for. The next time something bad happens why not look for the things you can be thankful for in the situation.

## Carrot, Egg or Coffee



### Quote of the day:

“Challenges make life interesting; however, overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.” — Mark Twain

### Think about it:

*A young woman went to see her mother and told her about all her troubles. Life was hard, and she felt like giving up.*

*No sooner had one problem been resolved, it seemed, a new one took its place. She was tired of the constant struggle. Her mother took her into the kitchen and filled three pots with water. In the first pot, she placed a carrot, in the second, she placed an egg, and in the third, she placed some ground coffee beans. She lit the stove and set the three pots to boil without saying a word. Twenty minutes later, she fished the carrot out and put it in a bowl. She pulled the egg out and put it in another bowl.*

*Then she ladled the coffee through a strainer and into a cup. Turning then to her daughter, she asked, “What do you see?” “A carrot, an egg, and coffee,” the young woman replied.*

*“Feel the carrot,” the mother said. The daughter tried to pick it up, but it fell apart between her fingers. It had turned to mush.*

*“Now the egg,” the mother said. The daughter cracked the egg on the edge of the bowl, peeled away the shell, and pronounced it hard-boiled.*

*“Now try the coffee.” The daughter smiled as she lifted the cup toward her mouth and breathed in the aroma, and she smiled even more broadly after the first sip. It tasted rich and full. “So what’s your point, Mother?” the young woman asked.*

*“The point is that the carrot, the egg, and the coffee all faced the same hardship— the boiling water—but each reacted differently. The carrot went in hard, strong, and unrelenting, but became weak and fell apart. The egg had been fragile, but after sitting in the boiling water, it became hardened. The coffee beans were different. When they sat in boiling water, they changed the water. “Which are you?” the mother asked.*

When adversity knocks at your door how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?

## Words Have Power



### Quote of the day:

“Change your thoughts and you change your world.” — Norman Vincent Peale

### Think about it:

I would like to add to this quote by saying that if we change our *words* it will help change our thoughts and thus change our world.

Have you ever heard someone say “Oh what a bad day” when it’s raining? I sadly admit, I’m guilty of this from time to time. If we call sunny days ‘nice days,’ it makes us think of rainy days as ‘bad days,’ but rainy days can be nice too. We need both sunshine and rain, and if we’ll try to always be thankful for each day we have whether it’s rainy or sunny, our outlook will change for the better.

It seems like such a simple lesson—to be thankful for both rain and sun—but taking some time to reflect on this, made me realize that the way we choose to talk about things affects our overall happiness and attitude towards life. Sad to say, many of us have formed the bad habit of adopting a negative terminology regarding certain situations.

To change the way we think about things, we need to also change the way we talk about them. Our vocabulary, the way we label things and the way we express things, has a major bearing on the way we think. If we want to think positively, we need to speak positively.

Every day, I am more convinced that words have power. Words can empower or limit us. Imagine that the words you use are like magnets, creating a field of energy that reaches out and brings back experiences that match the words you speak. I dare say you would be more careful in what you say. I know that I have been guilty of saying things without thinking about them such as:

*I can't remember anything these days.  
I'm too old to do that anymore.  
My body's not what it used to be.  
I hate exercise.*

I have also noticed that by saying these things I limit myself, as I reinforce that negative thought. But by changing my language and instead phrasing things in the positive way I have been changing my life for the better. For example:

*I remember everything I need to know when I need to know it.  
I can do anything I decide to do.  
My body gets stronger with every breath I take.  
I love moving my body.*

Take account of your words and see if they are matching up with what you want in your life. If not, start putting a more positive spin on your thoughts and words and see what happens.

## Encouragement



### Quote of the day:

“The finest gift you can give anyone is encouragement. Yet, almost no one gets the encouragement they need to grow to their full potential. If everyone received the encouragement they need to grow, the genius in most everyone would blossom and the world would produce abundance beyond our wildest dreams.” — Sidney Madwed

### Think about it:

There are many examples in history of people who did grand things, became someone great, discovered something unknown, invented something ingenious, wrote something creative, sang something beautiful, inspired others, and helped to make the world a better place through their efforts, all because someone had faith in them.

One such story is the famous Italian tenor opera singer, Enrique Caruso.

*Many years ago a boy of ten was working in a factory in Naples. He longed to be a singer, but his first teacher discouraged him. "You can't sing," he said. "You haven't any voice at all. It sounds like the wind in the shutters."*

*But his mother, a poor peasant woman, put her arms about him and praised him and told him she knew he could sing, she could already see an improvement, and she went barefoot in order to save money to pay for his music lessons. That peasant mother's praise and encouragement changed the boy's life. His name was Enrico Caruso, and he became the greatest and most famous opera singer of his age.*

Give the gift of encouragement whenever you can, you just may be an instrument to change someone's life for the better.



## Generosity Keeps Us In Perspective



### Quote of the day:

"It is preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else, which prevents us from living freely and nobly." — Bertrand Russell

### Think about it:

I think this commentary from author Robert Schnase from *Five Practices of Fruitful Living* marvelously illustrates this quote.

*"Giving puts us in a healthier relationship with our possessions and with the material world in which we live. We like making money, but we enjoy other things as well, such as the love of our family, belonging to community, a sense of meaning, accomplishment, contribution, and service. We enjoy making a positive difference in the lives of other people."*

*"But how do we maintain balance and perspective? How can we appropriately secure the basic needs of food, shelter, education, and health while also living with purpose? How do we avoid too much preoccupation with the things that do not ultimately satisfy, and cultivate those things that do? The intentional practice of generosity helps us keep our priorities straight."*

Do you have a preoccupation with possessions that is preventing you from living freely and nobly? Try being more generous and see if that helps to keep your priorities straight.

## Don't Let Failure Stop You



### Quote of the day:

“Nature gave us two ends: one to sit on and one to think with. Ever since then, man's success or failure has been dependent on the one he used most.” — Robert Albert Bloch

### Think about it:

*Gail Borden was once on board a ship coming home from England, where he saw children die as a result of drinking contaminated milk. The experience so impacted him he dedicated the remainder of his life to finding a way for humans to safely drink milk. His experiments with condensed milk failed, but then one day he saw how the Shakers in New York condensed their maple sugar in a vacuum-sealed pan. His success led to the safety of milk in a non-refrigerated world, began the modern dairy industry, and launched a multibillion dollar company.*

*On Gail Borden's tombstone are encouraging words of perseverance: "I tried and failed. I tried again and succeeded."*

A true story of one man's not giving up or letting his failures stop him from succeeding in his goals.

## Dare to Be Part of The Solution



### Quote of the day:

"Discovery of a solution consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different." — Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

### Think about it:

Whenever I hear someone bemoaning the state of the world, I'm reminded of something I first heard many years ago, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

It is easy to identify the problem as being due to "all the injustice and suffering in the world." This quote, I later learned, was by U.S. civil rights activist Eldridge Cleaver. It didn't tell me how I could become part of the solution, but it did reinforce my growing conviction that I couldn't turn a blind eye to problems.

If you want to be part of the solution, try to do your best, day by day, wherever you are, and it will make a difference. Will you dare to be part of the solution by thinking something different?

## Bad Habits



### Quote of the day:

"In any family, measles are less contagious than bad habits." — Mignon McLaughlin

### Think about it:

How true! Whether you're talking about bad language, bad thinking patterns, bad personal hygiene habits, or any other bad habit—bad habits are easier to pick up than good ones.

Forming good habits can be difficult. It's human nature to gravitate to the negative, and in today's world we are constantly exposed to bad habits, so much so, they often come like second nature. It's a challenge to fight against these negative influences so as not to be a contagious carrier of bad habits. It requires restraint and consistent practice, but it is well worth the effort.

Here is an exercise you can try to help get you started on creating good habits: Write down one bad habit that you do in the presence of others. Next, write down three steps you can take that will prevent you from passing that habit on to others. Then, put those steps into action.

## A Second Chance



### Quote of the day:

"The virtue of man ought to be measured, not by his extraordinary exertions, but by his everyday conduct" — Blaise Pascal

### Think about it:

It's difficult not to react negatively and make others feel bad for their mistakes. It is strength, not weakness, to give people a second chance when they are truly sorry for their mistakes and want to do better. Remember this the next time someone around you makes a mistake. If it's within your power, look for ways to give the person a second chance.

*Dale Carnegie tells a story that illustrates this. Bob Hoover, a famous test pilot and frequent performer, was flying home from an air show. At three hundred feet in the air, both engines suddenly stopped. By deft maneuvering Hoover managed to land the plane. Thankfully, no one was hurt, but the plane was badly damaged.*

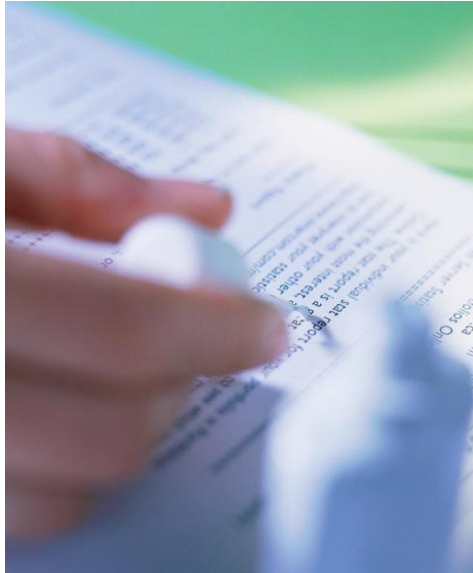
*Upon inspecting the aircraft, just as he suspected, the WW2 propeller plane had been fueled with jet fuel rather than gasoline. Upon returning to the airport, he asked to see the mechanic who had serviced his airplane.*

*The young man was sick with the agony of his mistake. He had just caused the loss of a very expensive plane and could have caused the loss of three lives as well. One could anticipate the tongue-lashing that this proud and precise pilot would unleash for such carelessness.*

*But Hoover didn't scold the mechanic; he didn't even criticize him. Instead, he put his big arm around the man's shoulder and said, "To show you I'm sure that you'll never do this again, I want you to service my F-51 tomorrow."*

How would you have reacted? If it's not in a similar way as Hoover reacted, then it's maybe time to rethink.

## Opportunity in Disguise



### Quote of the day:

“Opportunity often comes disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat.” — Napoleon Hill

### Think about it:

*Bette Nesmith Graham wanted to be an artist. However, shortly after World War II ended, she found herself divorced with a small child to support. She learned shorthand and typing and found employment as an executive secretary. An efficient employee who took pride in her work, Graham sought a better way to correct typing errors. She remembered that artists painted over their mistakes on canvas, so why couldn't typists paint over their mistakes?*

*Bette Nesmith Graham put some water based paint, colored to match the stationery she used, in a bottle and took her watercolor brush to the office. She used this to correct her typing mistakes. Soon another secretary saw the new invention and asked for some of the correcting fluid. Graham found a green bottle at home, wrote "Mistake Out" on a label, and gave it to her friend.*

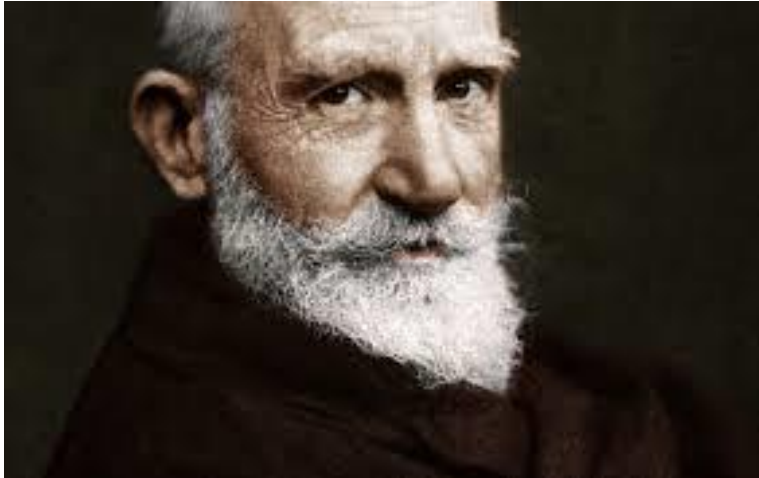
*Soon all the secretaries in the building were asking for some, too. One day an opportunity came in disguise. Graham made a mistake at work that she couldn't correct, and her boss fired her. She now had time to devote to selling "Liquid Paper", she now called it and business boomed.*

I know that in this computer age we no longer need white-out, but in the days of typewriters no secretary would have been without it and I am sure many a misfortune was averted because of it. Do I make my point? The moral of the story is Graham took the misfortune of losing her job to market her "Mistake Out" and things turned out better than she could have ever imagined.

What opportunities are disguised as misfortune in your life?



## Shyness



### Quote of the day:

“My first language was shy. It’s only by having been thrust into the limelight that I have learned to cope with my shyness.” — Al Pacino

### Think about it:

Limiting beliefs can often hold us back from living up to our full potential and must be fought with everything we have in us. Shyness is a result of listening to negative self-chatter and limiting beliefs and must be combated. Here’s an inspiring story of someone who overcame their shyness.

*The author and dramatist George Bernard Shaw is example of someone who overcame shyness, and he went on to become one of the wittiest, most outspoken public speakers of his time. When asked how he managed to change, he replied, “I did it the same way I learned to skate—by persistently making a fool of myself until I got used to it.” Finally he hit upon a way to conquer his shyness and fear.*

*As a young man, Shaw was so timid he would often walk up and down a street for 20 minutes before he dared to knock on the door of someone with whom he wasn’t well acquainted. “Few men,” he confessed, “have suffered more from shyness and simple cowardice than I have—or have been more ashamed of it!”*

*Determined to turn his weak point into his strongest asset, he joined a debating society. He also attended every meeting in London in which there was to be a public discussion, and forced himself to take part in the debate. With practice, his public speaking improved. Eventually George Bernard Shaw became one of the most confident and brilliant speakers of the early 20th century.*

Overcoming shyness isn’t just something you should do for yourself; it’s also part of being a contributing member of society. When you have a thought or idea that deserves to be heard, you’re not only hurting yourself by keeping quiet, you’re hurting the people around you. Others need you. They need your intelligence and insight. They need your help to work through problems. If you hide behind shyness, you limit the help you can give to your friends, family members, and colleagues.

Fight your shyness and let your talents shine.

## Respect



### Quote of the day:

“Courtesies of a small and trivial character are the ones which strike deepest in the grateful and appreciating heart.”  
— Henry Clay

### Think about it:

Everyone likes to be treated with respect and one way to show respect is by using good manners. Good manners are much like a roadmap, providing simple skills and techniques of common courtesy that can improve all our relationships and bring deep appreciation into the hearts of others.

However, it does take work to incorporate thoughtful behavior into the way we live and work, and there's no such thing as a vacation from good manners and politeness. A well-mannered person behaves nicely toward everyone, all the time. Demonstrating good manners is a lifestyle and not something that you can turn on when needed. Etiquette and proper decorum has to become part of your makeup and your everyday routine, or it's not likely that you'll be able to do well when you need it the most.

If you feel like you need a little help in this area, but you don't know where to start, don't despair. Improving your conduct simply takes making a conscious effort and a little practice! Start by becoming aware. Try to grade yourself on how you generally conduct yourself socially and professionally currently, noting areas where you stand to improve. Begin by asking yourself how you feel after an event or encounter. Do you later regret your comments or behavior? Did you overreact or respond in anger? Make a mental note where you can make positive changes, jot down a list, or keep a journal of the areas you would like to improve in. Check it weekly or monthly to see whether you've made progress.

## I Was Practicing For This



### Quote of the day:

“What ought one to say then as each hardship comes? I was practicing for this, I was training for this.” — Epictetus

### Think about it:

Many people comment to me that they've heard that positive thinking can make all the difference in difficult situations, but sometimes they are at a loss for things to be positive about. They want to know what they can do to get on a positive channel when everything seems to be going wrong.

When your heart is weighed down with worry, fear, sorrow, or pain, instead of dwelling on them, remember you were “training for this.” The best way to get on a positive channel is thinking about your blessings. If nothing else, you can be grateful for all the other problems you could have but don't.

Think on the good things. If you're thinking about goodness and making that the focal point of your concentration, then this pushes all the negative out of the way. You can't be positive and negative at the same time, so fill your mind with the light of praise, and it will push the darkness out.

## The Beggar and the Maharaja



### Quote of the day:

“Charity gives itself rich; covetousness hoards itself poor.” — German proverb

### Think about it:

There is a well known fable in India of a poor homeless beggar who lived in a State ruled by a Maharaja.

*The beggar set out every morning to beg by the roadside with his beggar's bowl. For merit, passers-by threw grains of rice or copper coins his way.*

*One day he heard that the Maharaja himself would be coming that way. That raised his hopes, as he said to himself, “Surely, the Maharaja will give me nothing less than a gold coin.”*

*The following day he took up his usual position by the side of the road, and patiently awaited the Maharaja's coming. Patiently the beggar waited, until almost sunset when he heard the Maharaja coming. Stepping into the road, he approached the Maharaja begging for alms.*

*Instead of giving him anything, the Maharaja extended his hands and asked the beggar to give him something. Extremely disappointed and disgusted at a wealthy ruler begging from a poor beggar, he counted out five grains of rice from his bowl and placed them angrily in the hands of the Maharaja. “Namaste,” said the Maharaja, and continued his journey.*

*Filled with sadness, the beggar returned home and began to clean the rice he had received that day. A small glittering object attracted his attention. Picking it up, he saw that it was a grain of gold. Laying it carefully to one side, he went on winnowing until he found another glittering golden grain, then another—a fourth, then a fifth golden grain was found, but no matter how long he searched after that, there were no other golden grains.*

*Then the truth dawned on him. Five grains of rice given to the Maharaja had brought him in return five grains of gold. “What a fool I was!” he exclaimed regretfully, “If I'd known I would have given him all of it.”*

I have experienced so many times, that the more I give the more I receive and the more I hold back the less I receive. Let us take a lesson from the beggar not to hoard ourselves poor but to give ourselves rich by giving, expecting nothing in return, and you will experience riches of mind and spirit, and often materially, too.

## The Birds Flying Over Our Heads



### Quote of the day:

“Temptations, of course, cannot be avoided, but because we cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, there is no need that we should let them nest in our hair.” — Martin Luther

### Think about it:

We most likely will never completely get rid of negative self-chatter but we don't need to let negative thoughts make a home in our minds and take up residence. We need to shoo those negative thoughts away by filling our minds with good, positive, uplifting thoughts, then the negative will fly away.

But, if you choose to allow them to hang around and build a nest, it will only bring anguish. Dwelling on the negative will only create havoc in your mind, heart, and spirit—not to mention it will be much harder in the end to get rid of the negative thoughts and their side effects once they have settled in.

So spare yourself a lot of heartache—make it a habit to think positively!

## Kindness



### Quote of the day:

"I wonder why it is that we are not all kinder to each other than we are. How much the world needs it! How easily it is done!" — Henry Drummond

### Think about it:

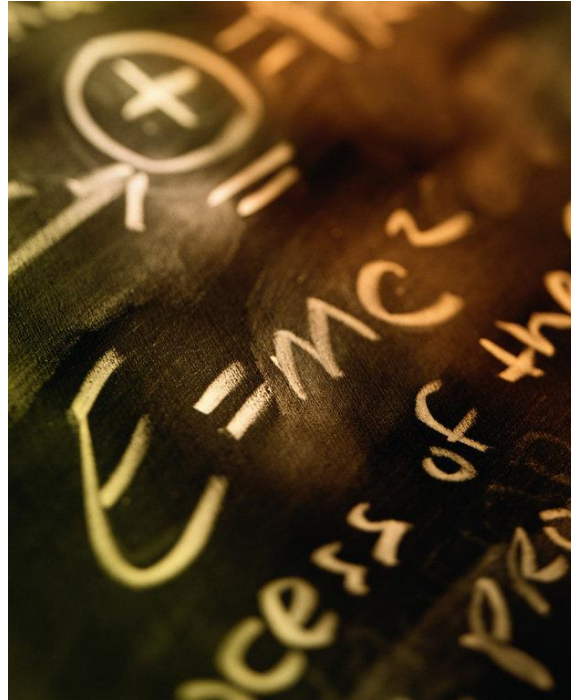
If you want to see the world and those around you change, then it starts with you—with your belief that others are more than they appear to be. You can draw out the good in those around you, appreciate individuals for who they are, acknowledge their gifts and talents and humbly be a conduit of love and appreciation to others.

Start by thinking of the positive ways that someone has helped you and the good that a person has done. Appreciate them in your thoughts. You will experience a change in how you view others, because you will have taken the time to go deeper, past the surface assumptions that are so easy to make and past your history with them.

Go slower in your interactions with people. It takes time to see people in a new light. It takes a slowdown of the hasty assumptions that are a result of mental ruts and thought patterns that require a change in perspective. Be willing to see who the person is today, or the potential of what they can be tomorrow, and don't let your view be marred by your past experiences.



## Struggles Bring Valuable Lessons



### Quote of the day:

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.” — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

Quick fixes are nice because they relieve the situation for the moment, but often the gain is only momentary. When solutions come easily, it’s easy to take them for granted and not learn from them, so the problems reoccur.

Sometimes you’re not meant to go around your problems but through them, because struggles bring with them valuable lessons that strengthen your spirit and make you wiser. You are then better equipped to handle problems that come up later.

If you’re trying to learn from every problematic situation, you will be doubly blessed in the end. You will fix the problem and you will be wiser for it.

## Unresolved Grief



### Quote of the day:

“Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the over wrought heart and bids it break.” — William Shakespeare

### Think about it:

I've noticed in my research that unresolved grief can be a great hindrance to our happiness and stunt our growth as well as prevent us from moving on and living a meaningful life. We all have experienced grief in one form or another, to some degree whether it be a loss of a loved one, a job, a pet, health, belongings, a public tragedy, a divorce, or any other sort of loss. It is important no matter what form grief comes into your life that you process it. If you let it build up too much it's not healthy for you physically, mentally or spiritually.

We all grieve differently but no matter how you grieve you have to allow yourself to do so, to feel the loss and then to release it, be healed and start living again. This may mean a measure of forgiveness both of yourself and/or others as well as other uncomfortable things necessary to recovery. Depending on how much grief you have you may need to receive help from a professional grief counselor either in person or through books. Whatever you decide it is important to not hang on to grief too long so it doesn't hold you back from completing your journey and mission.

Are there losses in your life that are holding you back that you need to deal with?

## Two Brothers



### Quote of the day:

“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” — Calvin Coolidge

### Think about it:

Here’s a story to illustrate this quote.

*There is an Oriental story of two brothers, Ahmed and Omar. Each wished to perform a deed that would be remembered as the years rolled on—a deed that might sound his name and praise it far and wide.*

*Omar, with wedge and rope lifted a great piece of marble on its base, carving in its form many a wondrous inscription on its sides. He left it to stand in the hot desert and cope with the gales—that was his great deed.*

*But Ahmed, with deeper wisdom dug a well to bring cheer to all in the sandy waste, and planted about it tall date-palms to make cool shade for the thirsty pilgrim and to shake down fruits for his hunger.*

These two deeds illustrate two ways in which we may live. We may think of *SELF* and worldly success and fame, living to gather a fortune only leaving tall sculptured marble cold and useless to the world. Or we may make our life like a well in the desert, with cool shade about it, to give drink to the thirsty and shelter and refreshment to the weary and faint!

Which will you do?

## Live in Victory



### Quote of the day:

“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”— Christopher Robin (Main character in *Winnie the Pooh* by A. A. Milne.)

### Think about it:

This is a great quote by Christopher Robin (character in the *Winnie the Pooh* series). The following story about a young man with extraordinary athletic skill and ability goes right along with it.

*At just nineteen years of age, Rafael Nadal already knew he wanted to be a world champion tennis player. The year was 2005, and having won his first Grand Slam title and charged up to No. 2 in the ATP rankings. He seemed poised to scale the heights of greater success. However, after experiencing several weeks of discomfort in his left foot, the doctors discovered he had been born with a rare foot disease. The condition caused one of the bones in his foot to swell and inflict frequent intense pain, with the potential to halt his entire career overnight.*

*This twist of fate tore through Rafa's youthful aspirations. Unable to walk, much less play tennis, he slipped into a dark spiral of depression. He spent hours lying on the sofa staring into space, or sitting in the bathroom weeping.*

*“I didn't laugh. I didn't smile. I didn't want to talk. I lost all appetite for life,” he said later. At that point, Rafa had to make a pivotal decision: He could give up or go on.*

*He could choose the easier path, but forfeit the potential rewards on the rugged way. He chose to press ahead, to focus on victory, even if he only saw and felt defeat. It was not an easy choice; he continued to suffer injuries and difficulties with his foot problem, but his determination paid off when, three years later, he stood as the world's number one tennis player.*

There are times when life deals us a harsh and bitter hand. Our dreams are broken, our hope is gone, and we are lost in despair. But even if all circumstances point to defeat, we can choose to live in victory. We can choose to hold on day-to-day, hour-by-hour, moment-by-moment. We can choose to get up and try again, even if we are afraid of failing. We can choose to love again, even if we have been hurt. We can choose to give, even if we have suffered loss. We can choose to believe that one day we too will emerge from our dark nights into a brilliant day.

## The Power of Forgiveness



### Quote of the day:

"Love is an act of endless forgiveness." – Author Unknown

### Think about it:

*Victor Hugo's literary classic Les Misérables tells the story of Jean Valjean, whose already difficult life is brought down by one lone decision when he steals a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children. As a consequence, he spends the next 19 years in the notorious Bagne of Toulon prison.*

*Unable to find work after his release because he is an ex-convict, Valjean begs at the home of the Bishop of Digne, who feeds him and gives him a bed for the night. But Valjean, overcome by despair at what seems an impossibly bleak future, yields to temptation, steals some of the Bishop's silver, and slips away in the night.*

*He doesn't get far, however, before he is arrested with the silver on his person, and is hauled back to face the Bishop. Knowing what will happen to Valjean if he is convicted a second time, the kind Bishop takes a chance on Valjean. He tells the police, "I gave him the silver." From that moment on he is a changed man.*

*Les Misérables* is a great story packed full of lessons, one being the moving portrayal of the redeeming power of forgiveness. Is there someone in your life you need to forgive granting them a second chance?

## Become Interested In Others



### Quote of the day:

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” — Dale Carnegie

### Think about it:

In the book “Positive Words, Powerful Results” by Hal Urban I found a wonderful way to do just this along with keeping the conversation on a positive note.

He tells the following story:

*I grew up in an era in which virtually all families ate dinner together I maintained the same tradition in my family. For ten years I was a single father with three sons. One of the things I noticed as the kids got older was that they wanted to spend less time at the dinner table. But I insisted that it be a time of family sharing.*

*Since the kids weren't all that keen on the idea, I felt it was my responsibility to come up with topics that would hold their interest. I came up with an absolutely brilliant idea: The question of the night. I would ask my sons who their favorite teacher was, what their favorite subject was, what their favorite sport was, etc. The question of the night remained brilliant for about two weeks. It was then that the question supply began to approach the empty mark. One night while I was preparing dinner, I kept drawing blanks on a good question.*

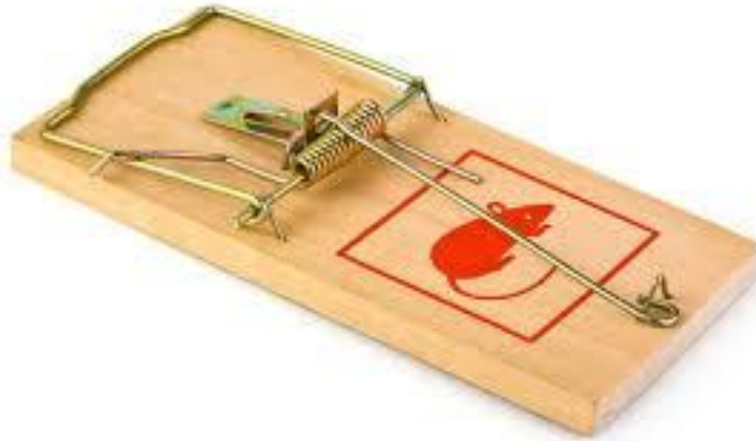
*The kids had grown to like it, so as soon as we all sat down, one of them asked, "So, Dad, what's the question of the night?" I had to admit to that I didn't have one but I said, "Instead of a question, how about if you each tell me what was the best thing that happened to you today? What was the highlight of your day?"*

*Purely by accident and out of desperation I had stumbled on the magic question! The kids all had something funny, heartwarming, or interesting to share. They also wanted to know what my highlight was. Over the years they learned a lot about my teaching career and about why I enjoyed it so much, and I learned about the things that were important to them.*

Adapting this suggestion to all conversations I have found that it makes an excellent conversation starter in any situation, to show your interest in others. You can learn so much about people this way, while affirming their worth at the same time. Why not try it at your dinner table, or in any conversation, and see what you come up with?



## The Mouse Trap



### Quote of the Day:

"First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me." — Martin Niemöller

### Think about it:

Here is an old fable about how our lives are woven together.

*A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package containing a mousetrap. Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning that there was a mousetrap in the house!*

*But the chicken clucked and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it." The pig sympathized, but said, "I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it." Then the mouse turned to look at the cow to hear what she was saying, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose." So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap all alone.*

*That very night the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey was heard throughout the house. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital, and she returned home with a fever.*

*As you know you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient. But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer's wife did not get well and she died. So many people came to attend her funeral; the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them. The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.*

The next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember—when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all connected in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to help one another.

## Temper



### Quote of the day:

“Anger dwells only in the bosom of fools.” — Albert Einstein

### Think about it:

*There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.*

*The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all.*

*He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.*

*The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, “You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. But it won't matter how many times you say ‘I'm sorry’, the wound will still be there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.”*

The next time you are tempted to lose your temper and say something you shouldn't, remember this story, and think about the wounds you may never be able to repair. Is it worth it?

## You Control the Radio



### Quote of the day:

“Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.” — Pope John XXIII

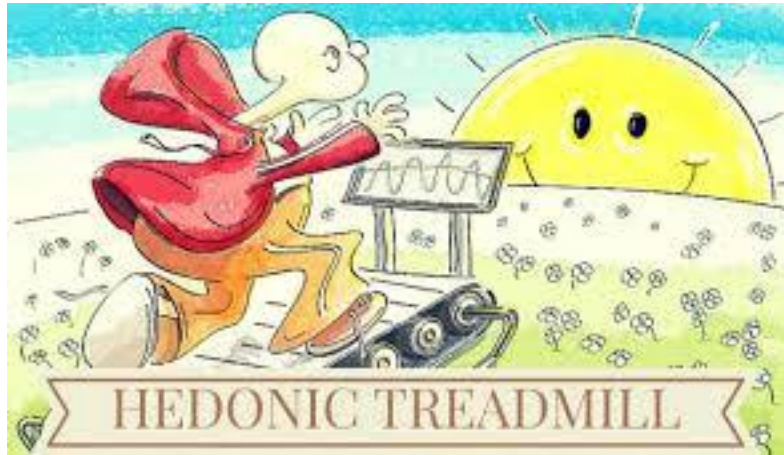
### Think about it:

The above quote is good advice to choose to be thinking of the good and the positive.

Think of your mind as a radio. There are many stations broadcasting—sending waves out in space. Good broadcasts inspire faith, hope, love, wisdom, truth, instruction, and other positive thoughts that inspire positive actions. But other stations may dwell on the negative and send out broadcasts that deliberately flood the airwaves with lies, propaganda and time-wasters—anything to occupy your mind and distract you from receiving the good and the positive.

You can choose which station to tune into. You control the radio of your mind. Which broadcast [voice] are you tuned in to? Which one guides your thoughts and thereby controls your time and actions? Will it be positive or negative?

## Hedonic Treadmill



### Quote of the day:

“We are always getting ready to live but never living.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Think about it:

There’s something called the hedonic treadmill, which is what happens when we, as humans, feel we’d be happier if certain things in our lives were different; maybe it’s a promotion, weight loss, more money, etc. Then we think, if we can just obtain that goal—if we can just get that “bigger” something, or simply “more” of what we think we want—we think that will make us happier, and on and on it goes.

Interestingly, some of that desire is healthy; it’s what causes us to want to develop our talents and improve. Imagine if we were all satisfied living in mud huts and hunting for survival, or if we all would be happy sending telegrams or using carrier pigeons for communication.

While striving to improve our lives and those of our loved ones is a normal part of life, the key thing to remember is to stop and be thankful for everything that we have right now, to realize that many people get by on so much less than we “think” we need. It is a healthy practice, to “count our blessings,” as the old song says. Then, rather than focusing on things or changes we “wish” we had, we can actually enjoy the wonderful lives we have right now.

## Synchronicity



### Quote of the day:

“A thousand unseen helping hands,” Joseph Campbell calls these breaks. I call them synchronicity.” — Julia Cameron

### Think about it:

If you start to notice when something happens that makes your life easier, when something you need magically appears, or when you receive an act of kindness from a stranger, this is what is called synchronicity, answer to prayer, coincidences, miracles, serendipity, confirmations, to name a few.

I have found that these synchronicities are important and worthy to take note of, or write about in your journal. By writing these experiences down you will start to notice them more and the clues they are giving you to guide your journey. Eventually you may even come to believe in the magic of synchronicity and begin to expect seeing them in your life at every turn as confirmations that you are on the right track.

During this next week pay close attention to the coincidences that occur in your life and take time to think about what they are telling you.

## Frugality Can Be a Good Word



### Quote of the day:

"Give what you have to somebody; it may be better than you think." — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

### Think about it:

I read in an article about "frugality fatigue" and how people were recovering from that. But my question is, "How did frugality become a problem from which to recover?" I thought it was a positive character quality—a partner with generosity and selflessness.

Frugality might have a bad name because some confuse it with stinginess. Being stingy is being cheap, hoarding what you have for personal enjoyment. Frugality is being careful with what you have, stretching it to its maximum, so you can have something left over to share with others. Stinginess is repulsive. Frugality is attractive. Stinginess screams "It's all about me." Frugality whispers, "The needs of others matter more than my wants."

I have been living below my means, and giving money away rather than spending it on myself for more than 50 years. Funny, though, I'm not a bit tired! The opposite has been my experience. The more I give energizes me to give part of myself—represented by my resources—to others. Giving money away rather than spending it on myself has not worn me out; it's given me an emotional boost.

Frugality, producing generosity, won't wear you out, it will energize you. Why not try it?



## Hold on Judgment



### Quote of the day:

“If we could read the secret history of our enemies we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.” — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

### Think about it:

Regarding forgiveness, consider this: When someone does something that you feel is not right or hurtful, try to recognize that people often act a certain way based on something that is going on in their life that you may be unaware of. Someone may do something that seems to you very selfish, but it isn't nearly as bad or selfish as you're assuming. Most likely you don't know the complete scope of the situation they're in. You don't know the thought processes that they're going through.

I know I've sometimes pre-judged a situation. I've wondered why someone acted a certain way, or said something that seemed hurtful, and I've thought negatively about them only later to find out that they had been quite sick, or something major was going on in their life, or in the lives of their loved ones, and they were really going through tough times. They were experiencing difficulty, and due to that, they weren't at the top of their game. The actions that looked selfish to me, may have been a consequence of their difficult situation.

It's important to have compassion, and to understand that each person is like a universe in themselves, we don't always know what's going on in someone else's universe. So it's wise to not be judgmental, but forgiving.

## As You Think, So Shall You Become



### Quote of the day:

“As you think, so shall you become.” — Bruce Lee

### Think about it:

In one of Frederik Marryat's books, a British naval officer and writer there is a part where the captain of some small British man-of-war is explaining to the hero how to acquire the quality of fearlessness. He says that at the outset almost every man is frightened when he goes into action, but that the course to follow is for the man to keep such a grip on himself that he can act just as if he were not frightened. After this is kept up long enough, it changes from pretense to reality, and the man does in very fact become fearless by sheer dint of practicing fearlessness when he does not feel it.

By acting as if you are not afraid, you will gradually cease to be afraid. You can put this practice into action regarding any emotion. By acting as if you are happy you will become happy. By acting as if you are successful you will become successful. By acting as if you are (fill in the blank) you will become (fill in the blank). The choice is yours.

## The Elephant and the Blind Men



### Quote of the day:

“When solving a problem or accessing a situation be sure to look at it from all points of view.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

This quote illustrates an important point: before jumping right into solving a problem, we should step back and take time to consider our perspective of it, as is so well reflected in the story of the elephant and the six blind men.

*There is an Indian fable about six blind men who encountered an elephant for the first time.*

*One man felt the elephant's leg and said, “An elephant is like a tree.”*

*Another grasped his tail and said, “No, an elephant is like a rope.”*

*The third bumped into the elephant's broad side and said, “I'm telling you, an elephant is like a wall.”*

*The fourth man felt an ear, smiled, and said, “Ah, I am now aware that the elephant is like a leaf.”*

*The fifth man grabbed one of the elephant's smooth, sharp tusks and declared, “The elephant is definitely like a spear!”*

*The sixth man caught hold of the elephant's trunk and said with certainty, “You're all wrong! An elephant is like a snake.”*

We laugh, but so often we are like one of these blind men, not seeing the whole picture and jumping to conclusions when we only see part of the “elephant.” It's important to look at all sides of every situation. Take time to look at each set of circumstances you are confronted with from a fresh perspective, being sure to look at all sides before coming to a final conclusion on the matter.

## Expect Greatness



### Quote of the day:

"It is the nature of man to rise to greatness if greatness is expected of him." — John Steinbeck

### Think about it:

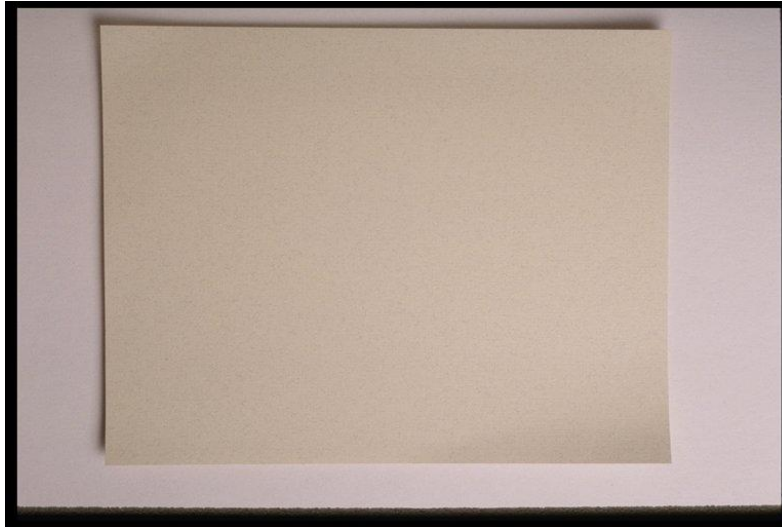
Of all the millions of people on earth, there are no two people alike. You are a unique person with unique gifts and talents that set you apart as an individual. Get excited by not only the potential that lies within you, but the exceptional qualities of others.

It takes optimism to be able to look past others' shortcomings—to see their potential and what they could become. The more you look for the good in people, the more good you will find. Like the saying, "Tell him he's admirable and he will be admirable. Tell her she's beautiful and she will be beautiful." Having a positive attitude towards another, shows you have faith in them, and when you demonstrate this, that person is likely to try and live up to your expectations.

If you focus on a person's bad habits or traits, it gradually takes on such importance in your mind that it eventually eclipses anything good about that person. But it also works the other way: If you can focus on even one good quality, you will discover other good things. If you start by looking for the good in just one person, you'll more easily find the good in others as well. It's contagious! Pretty soon others will view you as a happy, positive person who is nice to be around.

As you rise to greatness, encourage others around you to tap into their full potential as well, and as you help others succeed, you'll find it always comes back to you in positive ways. That's a win-win situation.

## Choose To Take On A Positive Attitude



### Quote of the day:

“Each day is a new canvas to paint upon. Make sure your picture is full of life and happiness, and at the end of the day you don’t look at it and wish you had painted something different.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

This quote reminds us how important it is to keep a check on our attitudes. We need to train ourselves into forming the habit of choosing to take on a positive attitude as opposed to a negative one. Just as a painter has the choice to paint a beautiful picture, so can we choose how we will “paint” our days—with life, happiness, love and positiveness, or with negativity, criticism, lack of enthusiasm and doubtfulness.

Take a minute or two and think about how you want to paint your day—will you choose vivid and cheerful colors, or gloomy grayish tones?

## Thanks Is The Highest Form of Thought



### Quote of the day:

“Thanksgiving Week comes, by statute, once a year; to the honest man it comes as frequently as the heart of gratitude will allow.” — Edward Sandford Martin

### Think about it:

Thanksgiving is a holiday celebrated in the U.S. the last week of November, and is traditionally the beginning of the Christmas season. It is a week to celebrate the blessings and the things we are thankful for in our lives. However, like the quote so eloquently suggests, we should not only be thankful on a special dedicated week, but every week of our lives.

In these unique times in which we are living, many people may be struggling to find things to be thankful for. Something that helps me remember to give thanks, is reminding myself that there is always someone else worse off than me.

Why not take a moment to think of one or two things you are grateful for, once you get started in this direction, you'll soon see that your list will begin to snow ball.



## Detoxify Your Spirit



### Quote of the day:

“Negative self-chatter, bitterness, anger, guilt, shame, fear, and lack of forgiveness, among others, are spiritual toxins poisoning your heart and mind and must be regularly cleansed.” — Dana Bosley

### Think about it:

I am very health conscious. I am careful not to eat poisons and I regularly try to cleanse my body of toxins. I was thinking about how the world in general has become more toxin conscious, fighting against air and other pollutions.

Dentists are helping us rid ourselves of mercury poisoning. And today we have laws to protect the public against hundreds of body poisons, with instructions to keep poisons out of the reach of children. Schools and toy businesses are careful not to use lead paint. Restaurants, in general, are on guard against food poisoning, and the list goes on and on.

There is an increased general awareness of the harm that poisons can do to our bodies. But what about the toxins and poison we take into our minds and spirits every day? Statistics show that every single week most everyone hears over 2,000 negative comments, not to mention all the negative self-chatter we tune into, as well as ugly and violent sights we see on a nearly daily basis via the media.

It is my firm belief that we should be as militant to protect ourselves from spiritual poisons such as negative thoughts and bitterness and to be regularly detoxifying ourselves from the negativity that surrounds us that is beyond our control. I feel that cleaning our spirits is just as important as cleaning our body.

Do you need to detoxify your spirit? For ideas on how to do this, read over the gratitude, positive thinking and quiet time pages of this book again.

## Treat Everyone With Politeness



### Quote of the day:

“Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you--not because they are nice, but because you are.”  
— Author Unknown

### Think about it:

When someone is rude to me I often think of this story.

*A father was buying a news paper from a paper boy who was rude to the man. However, the man continued his interaction with the newsboy with politeness even giving him a tip.*

*The son of the man questioned his father afterward as to why he had been so nice to the paper boy when he had been so rude to him.*

*The father advised his son "My boy treat everybody with politeness, even those who are rude to you. For remember that you show courtesy to others not because they are gentlemen, but because you are one."*

How you act reflects your character. That advice is not always easy to follow, but it certainly is sound. Is there anyone in your life that you need to treat kindly, generously or nicely not because they are nice but because you are?

## Thanksgiving



### Quote of the day:

“Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul.” — Henry Ward Beecher

### Think about it:

Thanksgiving is an annual national holiday observed across North America. In the U.S., this holiday, held on the fourth Thursday in November, commemorates the harvest festival celebrated by the Pilgrims in 1621. A similar holiday is held in Canada, on the second Monday in October. In the Netherlands they have a “Dank Dag” or “Thank Day.” It usually takes place on a Sunday, sometime in the fall, when a number of churches dedicate a service to giving thanks for not only the harvest, but all of God’s many blessings.

The actual word “thanksgiving” is defined as an expression of gratitude, especially to God. I like that definition.

Thanksgiving to me means remembering to be thankful for things on a daily basis. Only people can offer thanks to God for life and every other blessing. Other animals can walk upright, some even seem to have the capacity for communicating. But, so far as we know, humans alone have the capacity to realize that we enter the world with nothing and leave with nothing. Everything in between is a gift—and worthy of offering thanks to the One who provides all things.

This is one of the many reasons I love the Thanksgiving holiday. I especially look forward to reflecting on the past year and offering thanks to God for his many, many blessings. It’s our highest privilege as people.

What are you grateful for on this Thanksgiving Day?

## Marbles In a Jar



### Quote of the day

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not figures on a dial. We should count time by heart-throbs." – Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Here is the story that goes along with the quote from John Maxwell's book "The Maxwell Reader."

*"Let me tell you something that has helped me keep a good perspective on my own priorities. You see, one day I sat down and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and came up with 3,900, which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in his lifetime.*

*"It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail," he continued, "and by that time I had lived through over 2,800 Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy."*

*He went on to explain that he bought 1,000 marbles and put them in a clear plastic container in his favorite work area at home. "Every Saturday since then," he said, "I have taken one marble out and thrown it away. I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life. There's nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight."*

I love this story and taking it to heart, I've put my own jar of marbles on my desk to remind me of my priorities. Why not give it a try yourself.

## Habits



### Quote of the day:

“It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.” – Benjamin Franklin

### Think about it:

A friend of mine told me this story.

*They used to build bridges by first flying a kite from one side of the river or gorge to the other. Someone on the opposite side caught the kite and tied a little thicker, stronger string to the end of the kite string, and the men who had sent the kite over pulled the new, thicker string back across. The teams on each side kept repeating the process, next with an even stronger string, then a cord, then a thin rope, then a thicker rope, and so on. Eventually they could pull a small steel cable across, then a heavier one, until finally they had a cable across the expanse that was strong enough to support them and their tools and materials. —And it all started with one tiny kite string!*

That's how habits are formed, both good and bad. Add a thread every day, and before long you can't break it. Start developing a good habit by taking the first step, however small, in the right direction. Then keep at it until you've built up a routine that can't easily be broken.

## Robert G. LeTourneau



### Quote of the day:

"Don't just look for a blessing, be one." — Ladydell

### Think about it:

One of my favorite giving stories is about Robert G. LeTourneau who was the world's first manufacturer of large, heavy-duty earth-moving equipment. He was the first man to put huge 10-foot rubber tires on bulldozers out in the desert so they wouldn't sink in the sand. Up to that time they had never used rubber tires on earth-moving equipment at all.

*His business was going bankrupt. Although he wasn't a heavy giver he prayed and asked the Lord to save his business and to give him some kind of big order that would keep it going. In return he promised he'd start giving 10% of everything on it. His next order was for \$100,000! As soon as God blessed him that way, he started giving 20%. By 20 years or so later he was giving 90% of his income to the Lord's work and missions, and he and his family were living on the other 10%!*

This story inspires me. Even if you are not a Christian it is a law of the universe that what you give comes back to you. The same thing can happen to you no matter what your background, if you give from your heart, 10% or more of your income, you will gain.

I personally would like to live on 10% of my income and give 90% away. I'm not there yet but I'm working towards that and putting this principle to the test.

Want to join me in my experiment?



## Start Your Day On the Right Foot



### Quote of the day:

“The evening of your day starts in the morning.” — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Here are some suggestions for starting your day on the right foot:

- Vocalize four to five things you are thankful for.
- Read some positive, uplifting material.
- Journal.
- Take time to reflect or meditate.

These things will give you power and strength for the day.

I know it seems easier to simply jump right into the day rather than to take this “quiet time” in the morning in order to receive inner strength. Yet hitting the ground running at the start of the day makes our lives harder in the long run.

## Second Fiddles



### Quote of the day:

"It takes a rare type of ability to play the second fiddle with enthusiasm." — Sir Malcolm Sargent

### Think about it:

In today's world with the emphasis on being the best, it is hard to remember that a lot of the credit to how successful we are goes to how good our support team is. Like the story behind the quote illustrates.

Which of the instruments in the orchestra is the most difficult to play?

*If you ask any knowledgeable musical friends you're sure to start an argument, with some voting for the harp, other voting for the oboe or French horn. But the late Sir Malcolm Sargent had quite a different answer.*

*In his dressing room before the last night of the Proms one year he was asked that same question. Fingering the elegant carnation in his buttonhole, he pondered. "Without doubt, it is the second violin. I can find any number of violinists who can perform the job of being lead or first violin admirably." And his bright eyes twinkled. "But it takes a rare type of ability to play the second fiddle with enthusiasm."*

Sir Malcolm's words held a deeper meaning, of course. The world couldn't exist without its second fiddles. Think of the people who never hit the headlines, but cheerfully suppress their own ambitions to help a spouse or support a family, or employees who make it possible for businesses to ship on time and become internationally acclaimed. While the stars receive the flowers and the plaudits, the second fiddles are making music for the team, doing a good job, but often being overlooked and getting very little thanks for it.

Think about who are the second fiddles in your life, supporting you to succeed and give them the due respect and appreciation they deserve.

## Look For The Good In People



### Quote of the day:

“If you look for the bad in people expecting to find it, you surely will.” — Abraham Lincoln

### Think about it:

The quote reminds me of the story told about Socrates.

*Socrates was sitting outside of the gates of Athens when a man came up to him and said, ‘I am thinking about moving into Athens. Can you please tell me what it is like to live here?’*

*Socrates replied, ‘I would be happy to tell you, but first would you please tell me what it was like in your previous city?’*

*The man quickly roared, ‘Oh, it was awful. The people stab you in the back and rob you blind. I am not leaving any friends, only enemies.’*

*Socrates frowned and sadly continued, ‘Well, you best be on your way because you will find the same thing here in Athens.’*

*Another man stopped to speak to Socrates and inquired, ‘I was considering moving here to Athens. Can you tell me what it is like to live here?’*

*Socrates again replied, ‘I would be happy to tell you, but first would you please tell me what it was like in your previous city?’*

*The man smiled and said, ‘Where I come from the people all work together and help each other. Kindness is everywhere and you are never treated with anything but the utmost respect.’*

*‘Welcome to Athens,’ smiled Socrates, ‘You will find the same thing here.’*

If we look for the bad in things, places or people we will find it. However, if we look for the good in every situation, we will find that too.

## Be Prepared



### Quote of the day:

"In every pain is folded a seed of blessing—we should make sure that the seed shall have an opportunity to grow and that we may gather it's fruit." — J.R. Miller

### Think about it:

I read an article some time back, about Harrison Ford. It explained that after five or six years of performing in obscurity Harrison took up carpentry to support his family, but he never gave up his dream to one day act, and he kept himself prepared for opportunity.

As fate would have it, Harrison secured a job with George Lucas making cabinets which developed into a friendship as well as a starring role in the Star Wars series of movies. What had begun as an arrangement to build cabinets turned into one of the most lucrative partnerships in American film history, but it never would have happened if Harrison Ford hadn't been prepared.

This story always impressed me and has given me hope to never give up my dreams and to always stay prepared for the next opportunity that is just around the corner.

## Forgiveness Exercise



### Quote of the day:

"Forgiveness is the act that helps another's wrong to not become your wrong as well." — Unknown Author

### Think about it:

I know that forgiveness is hard to do and even if we want to forgive we sometimes don't even know how. I found the below exercise to be helpful. Try it yourself and see if it doesn't help you to release your desire to hold on to those things you should be letting go of.

*Take a potato and write on it the name of a person who has fallen from grace with you. Do this for everyone who has raised your ire and never received your forgiveness. When you've finished, gather all your potatoes together and place them in a sack. Keep this sack next to you at all times: Take it to work. Take it to lunch. Take it everywhere you go. And always have it with you at home.*

*How long would it take for you to grow tired of carrying this burden around? How long would it take your potatoes to sprout into other things, fester and smell?*

*Wouldn't it be nice to be free from the weight, stench, and constant reminder of hurt, disappointment, heartache, and anger? By hanging on to things that are unpleasant, we create more anguish for ourselves. When you forgive someone, you free yourself from an oppressive load of negativity. Forgiveness allows you to create peace in your life.* -Adapted from the Afterhours Inspirational Stories Web site.

## The Taste Berry



### Quote of the day:

"Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful." — The Buddha

### Think about it:

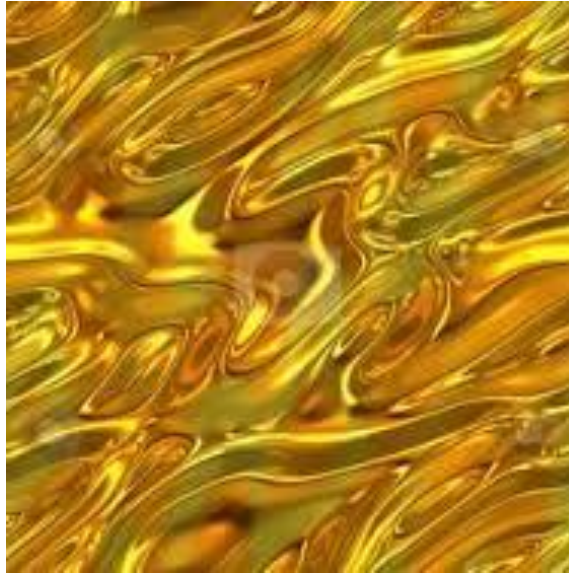
I was talking to a friend today who was telling me about a magic fruit that comes from Africa. He said that when eaten every sour or bitter thing consumed afterwards is turned to sweet. I remember reading a story about this many years ago, and the fruit was called the *taste berry*. I imagine it is the same fruit. I can only think that the power of gratitude is like this fruit, when used, it turns every sour or bitter situation to sweetness.

Like William Arthur Ward said, "Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings."

Be faithful to use your magic fruit of gratitude daily and turn even the sourest circumstances into sweetness.



## Are You Still Wriggling?



### Quote of the day:

“When we long for life without difficulties, remind us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure.” — Peter Marshall

### Think about it:

It seems like all valuable things have to go through a refining process—diamonds under great pressure and gold and silver in the fire.

*In medieval times, the goldsmiths had a unique method to determine when the refining fire had purged away all extraneous matter from the precious metal. When a goldsmith puts gold into the crucible and the fire begins to work on the dross, it begins to wriggle and wriggle, and as the dross is burned out it gets quieter.*

*The goldsmith would stand patiently and peer intently into the seething, molten mass, meantime making the fire hotter and hotter. At last, a smile of satisfaction would lighten up the perspiring face of the goldsmith. He could see his face reflected in the molten mass of gold. Seeing his face mirrored there, he knew that the refining fire had wrought its purifying purpose.*

Remembering this story always encourages me when I'm going through the fires of difficulty. I think to myself while in the midst of trouble that I'm still wriggling and that I just need to hold on before I can come out like pure gold. Like the quote implies, difficulties are good for us. What difficulty in your life do you need to look at in a new light?

## Changing the World



### Quote of the day:

"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." — Warren Buffet

### Think about it:

This quote jogged my memory about a story that always encourages me about how even one person can do a lot to change the world no matter how bad things look at the time.

*In 1923, a young man was on a walking tour in France. The area was barren and desolate of trees. There was little farming being done because of the lands poor condition. The villages were rundown and many of the people had deserted the countryside because of the situation. The young traveler ended up staying at the cottage of an old shepherd. He observed that the shepherd was spending his evening hours sorting nuts. Once sorted, the shepherd would put them in a knapsack, and as he led his sheep to graze the next day he would plant the nuts along the way.*

*The young visitor said to the shepherd, "It will be years before these trees ever get to where they could do you any good! You might not even live long enough to see them grow!"*

*But the shepherd replied, "Yes, but some day they'll do somebody some good and they'll help to restore this dry land."*

*Twenty years later when the young hiker returned to the area he was astounded at the change. It was now covered with a beautiful natural forest of all kinds of trees! Grass, shrubbery, bushes and berries were flourishing, and the wildlife had returned. The soil was moist and the farmers were cultivating the land once more.*

*The efforts of one man brought an entire region back to life again, restoring its economy, its wildlife, its agriculture, its water, its soil, and even its population--all because of the foresight, diligence, patience, sacrifice, and faithfulness just to do what one man could do, day by day.*

So if sometimes you're discouraged with the way the world is, don't give up! Reflect on this lesson from the shepherd. One man made a big difference, and so can you.

## Don't Judge a Book By Its Cover



### Quote of the day:

"You can easily judge the character of others by how they treat those who they think can do nothing for them." -- Malcolm Forbes

### Think about it:

Someone sent me this true story by Malcolm Forbes illustrating his quote.

*A lady in a faded gingham dress and her husband, dressed in a homespun threadbare suit, walked timidly without an appointment into the Harvard University President's Outer office. "We'd like to see the president," the man said softly.*

*"He'll be busy all day," the secretary snapped. "We'll wait," the lady replied.*

*For hours the secretary ignored them, hoping that the couple would finally become discouraged and go away. They didn't, and the secretary grew frustrated and finally decided to disturb the president, even though it was a chore she always regretted. "Maybe if you see them for a few minutes, they'll leave," she said to him! He sighed in exasperation and nodded. Someone of his importance obviously didn't have the time to spend with them. The president, stern faced and with dignity, strutted toward the couple.*

*The lady told him, "We had a son who attended Harvard for one year. He loved Harvard. He was happy here but about a year ago, he was accidentally killed. My husband and I would like to erect a memorial to him, somewhere on campus."*

*"Madam," he said gruffly, "We can't put up a statue for every person who attended Harvard and died. If we did, this place would look like a cemetery."*

*"We don't want to erect a statue. We thought we would like to give a building to Harvard," the lady said.*

*The president rolled his eyes and exclaimed, "A building! Do you have any earthly idea how much a building costs? We have over seven and a half million dollars in the physical buildings here at Harvard."*

*The lady turned to her husband and said quietly, "Is that all it cost to start a university? Why don't we just start our own?" Her husband nodded.*

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford got up and walked away, travelling to Palo Alto, California where they established the university that bears their name, Stanford University. The saying, "you can't judge a book by its cover" is certainly true. Not only in this story, but in life in general, you cannot know what someone is like by looking only on their outward appearance. How do you treat people who you think can do nothing for you?

## Set To Work And Inspiration Will Come



### Quote of the day:

“Inspiration comes of working every day.” — Charles Baudelaire

### Think about it:

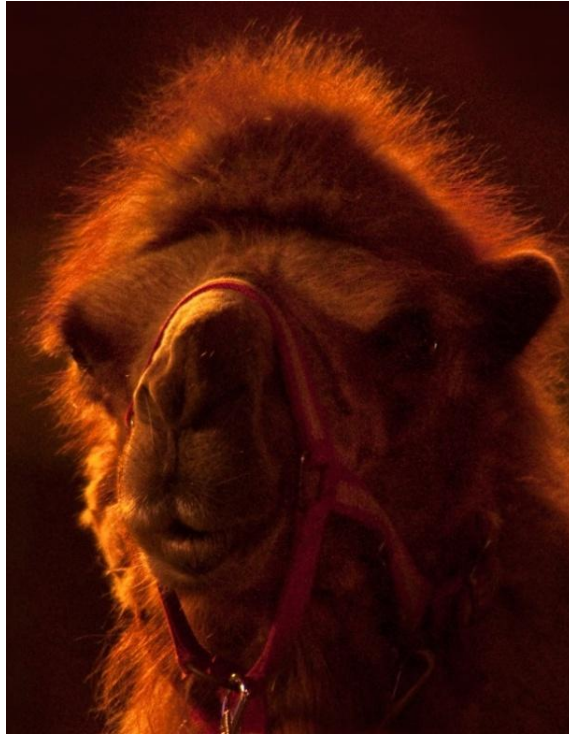
Have you ever felt uninspired about things you have to do? I certainly have.

When I feel that way I remember the great composer does not set to work because he is inspired, but rather he becomes inspired because he is working. Beethoven, Wagner, Bach, and Mozart settled down day after day to the job in hand with as much regularity as an accountant gives his full focus each day to his figures. They didn't waste time “waiting” for inspiration before they got busy. They put their nose to the grindstone and dug right into their work, then the inspiration came.

Please realize that action is the key to making positive changes in your life. Without action, no matter how much knowledge you have, no matter if you know what the right thing to do is, it won't do you any good. Inaction will not result in fulfillment, taking action will!

So take courage from Charles Baudelaire that inspiration will come as we take action and set to work.

## The Camel's Nose



### Quote of the day:

"It's not what you are that holds you back. It's what you think you're not." — Denis Waitley

### Think about it:

Have you ever heard the story of the Camel's nose? It reminded me of the fight against negative self-chatter and if you give it an inch it will take a mile.

*According to a Bedouin fable, an Arab and his camel were crossing the desert. Night came and the temperature dropped. The Arab put up his tent, tied his camel to it, and went to sleep.*

*As the temperature dropped further, and the camel asked the Arab for refuge from the cold the Arab was adamant, "There is only room in the tent for one!"*

*The camel was quiet for a few minutes, but soon asked again. "Please, Master! Just my nose. If I could just put my nose in your tent, it would keep me from freezing out here." The Arab reluctantly agreed.*

*But no sooner did the camel have his nose in the tent did he start begging to move the rest of his body in. Relentlessly he kept at it and each time the Arab gave in. Until finally the whole camel was in the tent and the Arab was forced to move out into the cold, where he barely survived the night.*

Negative self-chatter is like that camel. It just needs a small opening to get started—usually a thought that seems to have some basis in truth or reason—but if you entertain that thought, pretty soon it and a whole lot more like it move in and take over. Don't let the camel get its nose inside the tent of your mind and hold you back.



## Christmas Season



### Quote of the day:

“Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love!” — Hamilton Wright Mabie

### Think about it:

The Christmas season seems to start sooner and sooner but for many years it traditionally started the day after the US Thanksgiving holiday.

For those of you who may not know what Christmas is it is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ who Christians believe came to reunite us again with God. Thirty-three years after Jesus’ birth he was crucified and rose from the dead completing His mission. If we receive His free gift of eternal life by acknowledging His sacrifice we can be reunited with God in a wonderful way. Jesus’ story is one of the greatest stories of triumph over adversity and shows how good can come out of seeming defeat.

Because Jesus went around everywhere doing good and was the greatest sample of the values I have strived to portray in this book I thought it appropriate that the next few entries to should have the Christmas flavor.

I love the Christmas season as it brings out the best in people. Will you join in on the conspiracy of love? Show love, even if only in small ways, to those who cross your path each day and see if it doesn't make a profound difference—not only to them, but to you!



## The First Nativity Scene



### Quote of the day:

"The Light that shines from the humble manger is strong enough to lighten our way to the end of our days." — Vita-Rays

### Think about it:

Since in most countries they start putting up Christmas decorations in late November I thought it might be interesting to hear one of the stories behind the Christmas nativity story.

*The story of the first Nativity scene is a well-known Christmas standard: Saint Francis of Assisi is traditionally believed to have asked the citizens of the village of Greccio, in 1223, to play the characters in the Nativity. What's certain is that these "living cribs" became highly popular and the tradition spread around the world.*

*The trouble was that these were large-scale affairs that often required dozens of actors and a great deal of preparation. During the French Revolution, religious reenactments were suppressed, and Nativities were reduced to miniature scenes that families could recreate at home.*

*Some of the most famous of these are the brightly colored "santouns" (small saints, in the local dialect) from Provence. In addition to the biblical players—Jesus' family, the shepherds, angels, and kings—these Nativity scenes usually include a collection of everyday characters and traditional trades.*

*There is one character you may not immediately recognize but who is essential to any Provençal Nativity. He isn't bringing any gifts, but his arms are raised and his expression is one of intense surprise and joy. He is Lou Ravi (the delighted one). In Italy, a similar Nativity figure is called Lo Stupito (the astonished one), and their shared characteristic is a strong sense of awe and marvel. They seem empty-handed, but actually, they're bringing the most beautiful gift of all—their wonder.*

We who know the story of Christmas so well can easily grow familiar with its blessing. Jesus' birthday becomes a traditional, recurring event much like any other, when in fact, it's anything but. The truth is: God loves us so much that He came to earth as a human, in the form of His Son, Jesus, so we could get to know Him and learn to trust Him and love Him back. May we always retain *Lou Ravi's* childlike wonder at this incredible gift!

## Celebrate Christmas All Year



### Quote of the day:

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all year." — Charles Dickens

### Think about it:

A Christmas Carol, written by Charles Dickens in 1843, has been retold in numerous versions and forms. It is a timeless story and is much more than an account of a mean, miserable old man—Ebenezer Scrooge—who changes his ways after a Christmas Eve visitation by three spirits. It is a reminder that it is only when we give to others that we truly celebrate the spirit of Christmas.

Giving may be material, like a beautifully wrapped present or a monetary gift to someone in need, but true giving is more than that; it extends to sharing ourselves.

Why not make your celebration of Christmas extra special this year by not only giving at Christmas, but by giving all year long?

## Living A Life That Matters



### Quote of the day:

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience” —  
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

### Think about it:

We are coming to the end of this book and the end of the year. I hope through the quotes and stories I have shared that I have impressed upon you the importance of relationships, building self-worth, building character, giving forgiveness, gratitude, taking quiet time and giving because ready or not, sooner or later someday it will all come to an end for all of us. There will be no more moments to enjoy. Your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away. It won't matter where you came from or what social station you held. It will not matter what you owned. It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant or not. Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured? What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got but what you gave. What will matter is not your success, but your significance. What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, kindness, generosity, compassion or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstances but of choice. So choose wisely. What sort of difference will you make this coming year?

## Thank You For The Respect



### Quote of the day:

“The joy of brightening other lives, bearing each others' burdens, easing others' loads, and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts, becomes for us the magic of Christmas.” — W. C. Jones

### Think about it:

When the very first Christmas card was printed in December 1843 at the request of Sir Henry Cole, an Englishman living during the reign of Queen Victoria, who would have ever imagined that 173 years later an estimated five billion Christmas cards would be sent each year worldwide? What a wonderful idea and it reminds me of a story told by Reamer Kline.

*One summer my family gave work to a wandering man, even though we suspected he had a problem with alcohol. In the fall, he left us, but at Christmas a greeting arrived from hundreds of miles away—no personal message, just a signature. Then in the spring he came to see us.*

*“I’ve stopped drinking,” he said. “I’m going to a permanent job.”*

*When we thanked him for his Christmas card, he told us that it was the only card he had sent. “I wanted it to say ‘thank you,’ not for the work, but for the respect you gave me. It helped me to begin a new life.”*

Stop and think who needs your respect and encouragement and then act on it.

## Christmas Giving



### Quote of the day:

"Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas." — Dale Evans Rogers

### Think about it:

It is this spirit which glorifies true *Christmas giving*.

Christmas is a wonderful day. It works *miracles of love* all over the world. But the true glory of Christmas is seen in what it does among the *poor*, in *prisons* and *hospitals* and *orphanages* and *refuges* of all kinds, where it brings its portion for those for whom nothing has been prepared. Love is very sweet when it pours out its gifts for those who love us. But love reaches the finest moments when it brings its blessings to those who perhaps do not love us, or those who will never thank us, nor remember what we have done, nor return gratitude for our kindness.

Is there someone you can manifest your *Christmas giving* to that cannot repay you?

## Beauty Planted In the Human Soul



### Quote of the day:

“A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul.” — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

### Think about it:

I agree with von Goethe that it is important to refresh our souls with the wonder and beauties of God's world. He has given some excellent advice and I would encourage you to take time during the holidays to spend more time in quiet reflection, to listen to heart stirring music, to read a little poetry, to be inspired by beauty, to renew your wonder for the coming year and to wash away the worldly cares and ugliness of the past year.

My prayer for you is as Agness M. Pharo says, “I pray that the New Year brings with it tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future and that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.”



## Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree



### Quote of the day:

“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.” — Calvin Coolidge

### Think about it:

Some years ago a popular song was the ballad, "Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree." There is an old Christmas story which pre-dates the song, but it tells of a similar homecoming.

*In that tale, a young runaway boy is returning home on Christmas Eve by train. He has written ahead to tell his parents he wants to come back, but he isn't sure that he will be welcomed. The train runs right by the boy's home, so he has asked his father to tie a red cloth on the big elm at the back of the farm, to signal him.*

*When he is yet a few miles away, the runaway shares his anxiety with an older man sitting next to him. The man says he knows the teenager will be as welcome as another young man who ran off one time. Then he tells him Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son which is found in the Bible.*

*Sure enough, when the train reached the old homestead, the father's red signal was out. But instead of one banner, there were dozens of red flags waving in the wind, one from every conceivable branch, shouting the news to a runaway boy that all was forgiven at Christmas.*

Why not make this time for forgiving and forgetting old grudges.

## The Christmas Apple



### Quote of the Day:

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others." — Cicero

### Think about it:

Here's a sweet Christmas story from Anna Perlini. Ana is a co-founder of Per un Mondo Migliore (<http://www.perunmondomigliore.org/>), a humanitarian organization active in the former Yugoslavia since 1995.

*Christmas 1984 was our family's third Christmas away from Europe. The remote village in eastern India where we had moved to help as volunteers, had become a second home. After some initial difficulty in adjusting to such a different climate and culture, we soon came to appreciate the wonderful people we lived around and to embrace the new sights, sounds, tastes, and fragrances. I began to especially look forward to shopping at our local market, which seemed to have a year-round selection of fabulous juicy fruits—mangos, bananas, lichees, papayas, jackfruits, limes, and others. It was on one of those trips to the market that we happened to see a stand that was selling, at an exorbitant price, some beautiful apples. We were told that these had arrived from the far north of the country, which explained the price tag.*

*Memories from my childhood surged, and of course, Christmas is a time when memories seem to carry special potency. My eldest daughter was accompanying me that day and put my feelings into words: "It would be so nice to have an apple for Christmas." That's how the idea for our family's Christmas surprise came about. My husband and I spent an evening wrapping small cardboard boxes filled with cookies, nuts...and one big, red apple!*

*On Christmas morning, the kids opened their boxes and jumped up and down at the sight of those apples! I think we parents had just as much fun watching them and, since we also got a Christmas box, savoring our own precious apple.*

*We returned to Europe a number of years ago and have since had plenty of apples, but our entire family still cherishes the fond memory of that one "poor" Christmas when we experienced that "rich" feeling of thankfulness for a simple apple.*

May we always find a simple, humble reason to be grateful—not just at Christmas, but in every celebration and event all year-round.

## Encourage People In Their Progress



### Quote of the day:

“Always assume each and every person wants to do a better job and grow.” — Steve Farrar

### Think about it:

Another lesson in Charles Dickens' story "The Christmas Carol" is the change that happened in Scrooge. If you ask almost anyone they will tell you he was a miserable old miser who hated Christmas. However, that is not a true representation because at the end of the story he is a generous and kindly man.

It is sad that so often we don't give people credit for the changes and growth in their life when we talk about them. Instead of seeing them in a new light we speak of them like we do Scrooge, seeing him still as the miserly old man pictured at the beginning of the story.

Unfortunately it is easier to remember the worst in people. I think we all have some Scrooges in our lives--people we see only in a bad light. Perhaps they made a mistake once. Let's not hold that against them. It's the Scrooge at the end of the story that matters, not the one at the beginning.

Let's take a lesson from the story, "The Christmas Carol" and encourage people in their progress and change.

## The Butterfly



### Quote of the day:

“So long as the memory of certain beloved friends lives in my heart, I shall say that life is good.” — Helen Keller

### Think about it:

I read this story from Peter Van Goder in the Activated Magazine and thought it was a fitting story for this time of year as Christmas approaches, especially for those who may have lost loved ones around this time.

*As I was researching material for a short story about an antique dealer who collected rare butterflies, I came across a website<sup>1</sup> that revealed a rich resource of stories involving those fascinating creatures.*

*I was amazed at the vast quantity of stories that had been contributed to this one website—hundreds of experiences—and I was struck by how big an impact the tiny butterfly has had on the lives of us mortals throughout the ages! Over 2,000 years ago, the ancient Greeks were already using the transformation of butterflies from pupa to adult as a metaphor of the soul’s resurrection and immortality.*

*A common thread running throughout the accounts I read on the website of butterfly encounters was how these wondrous creatures have comforted people in particularly difficult times in their lives. After reading so many of these stories, I wondered if butterflies could work their magic for me too. I was going through a rough time and especially missing my oldest daughter, who had passed away seven years earlier.*

*One evening, I asked God to send me a butterfly as a sign that she is still with us in spirit, and then forgot about it. However, the next day, as we were packing our equipment and loading up after a show in a distant rural area, a colorful butterfly persisted in fluttering by me the entire time. Then later as I was commenting on this to my friend while we were stopped at a traffic light, another butterfly passed in front of our windshield, as if to say, I am still with you.*

*But the most remarkable butterfly encounter occurred on Christmas Day. As our family was gathered around the tree, opening presents and enjoying one another’s companionship, a butterfly floated into the room and rested near the light. It stayed with us all day and all that night. The next morning it was gone, as if it had completed its mission. We were encouraged and thankful for its visit, feeling this was a sign to remind us of our daughter at this special time.*

*Of course, our encouragement and comfort should not be dependent on such signs, but we can nonetheless appreciate them when they occur. God’s Word promises that if we ask, we will receive. If you need comfort or direction in your life, God can send messengers to your aid in a variety of forms—with or without wings.*

I hope this story was a comfort to you as it was to me.

## Don't Cram All Your Good Deeds Into Just A Few Days



### Quote of the day:

"I sometimes think we expect too much of Christmas Day. We try to crowd into it the long arrears of kindness and humanity of the whole year. As for me, I like to take my Christmas a little at a time, all through the year." — David Grayson

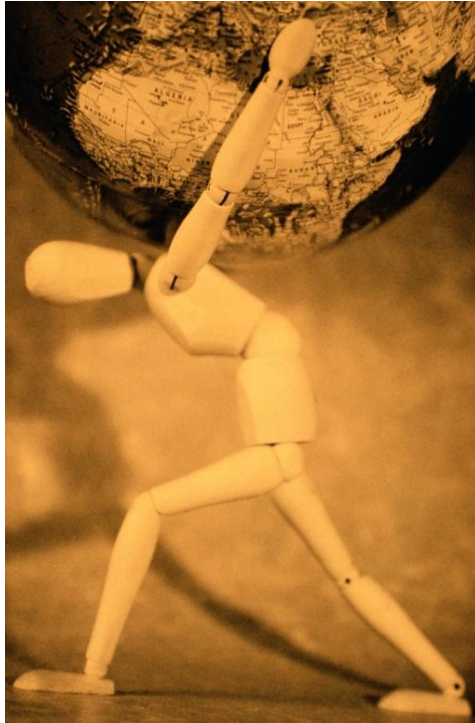
### Think about it:

This quote succinctly answers exactly what I was questioning last year during the holidays. I enjoy watching Christmas movies but it dawned on me how in each of the movies I watched, the main character was so negative about the holidays. I think it just might be that we expect too much of it, and so we cram in all our good deeds for the year in just a few days, and that's too much to expect of anyone.

Wouldn't you agree, it would be much better to do as the quote suggests, and give a little love, kindness, forgiveness and generosity all through the year?



## Caring For Our Fellow Humans



### Quote of the day:

“The earth has grown old with its burden of care, but at Christmas it always is young.” — Phillips Brooks

### Think about it:

I agree, it certainly does seem that sometimes the need is overwhelming and the burden of caring for our fellow humans is heavy. At times, I am tempted to feel discouraged that there is too much to do and I have so little to give compared to the great need.

Yet how true is the latter part of this quote. Christmas is a time when I feel young and my strength is renewed when I remember not just the duty of giving, but what great happiness and satisfaction it brings.

Why not try giving to someone who you know cannot repay you and see if the joy of giving does not rejuvenate you?



## The Salt Dough Model



### Quote of the day:

"May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through!" — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

A few years ago, a very talented friend of mine spent untold hours building a wonderfully intricate Christmas model out of salt dough. The centerpiece was the stable, but the scene stretched well beyond that, deep into Bethlehem and the surrounding countryside.

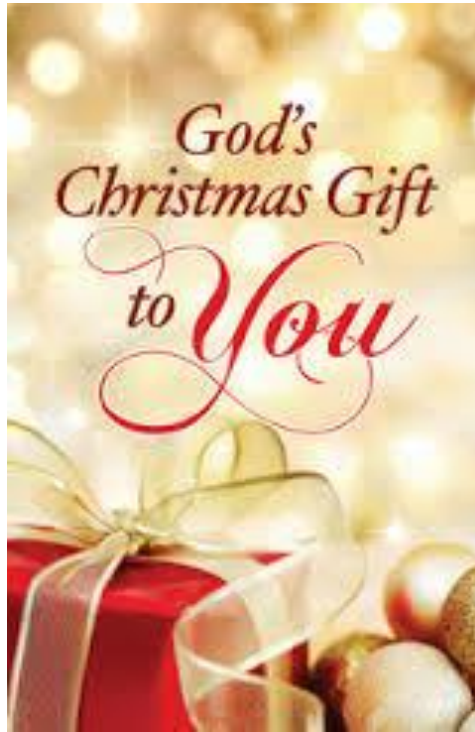
The buildings were painted, the streets were strewn with very fine gravel, there was moss in the gardens and on the hills, and the village was alive with mansions, hovels, shops, inns, and a multitude of people (and stray cats) milling about.

It was fascinating. The scene gave a view not just of what was happening in the stable but also what might have been going on in the rest of town that night. It brought to life how, apart from the shepherds who saw and heard a choir of angels singing and praising God, most people were likely going about their business without a clue.

In some respects, that's how things still are. It's easy to find ourselves going through Christmas without experiencing it to the full. Even while enjoying the holiday spirit and festivities, it's possible to let the deeper meaning of the season pass us by.

Unbeknownst to most of Bethlehem's inhabitants on the night of the first Christmas, something marvelous was happening in their midst, and something wonderful can happen this season in each of our lives as well, if we open our hearts to it. It may not be something flashy or huge, and if we're not careful we might miss it, but I believe that Christmas is a magical time, and I'm looking forward to what it has in store. I hope you are too.

## Merry Christmas



### Quote of the day:

"I truly believe that if we keep telling the Christmas story, singing the Christmas songs, and living the Christmas spirit, we can bring joy and happiness and peace to this world." — Norman Vincent Peale

### Think about it:

Over these last few days I've been meditating on the significance of Christmas and what a wonderful day it is. Christmas celebrates the most important birth in human history, when God the Son physically entered into the world as both God and man in Jesus. Never before or since has such a unique and important person been born. Jesus' birth, His coming to earth, His becoming human, was all about the salvation of humankind. His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven were all about salvation—yours, mine, and everyone else's.

The message of Christmas is the message of John 3:16, and I would add verse 17 as well: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."

Whoever believes.—That the world might be saved through Him. Salvation is available to all. It's God's gift to us—Jesus—God's Christmas gift to mankind.

Merry Christmas!

## Preparing for the New Year



### Quote of the day:

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.” — Abraham Lincoln

### Think about it:

Sometimes we think we don't have time to prepare for a project. When actually if we took a little time to plan and prepare our tools we would save time as the following story illustrates.

*Once upon a time, a very strong woodcutter asked a timber merchant for a job, and he got it. The pay was good and so were the work conditions. For those reasons, the woodcutter was determined to do his best. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area where he was supposed to work. The first day, the woodcutter brought in 18 trees.*

*“Congratulations,” the boss said. “Keep it up!” Motivated by the boss' words, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he could only bring in 15 trees. The third day he tried even harder, but he could only bring in 10 trees. Day after day, he was bringing in fewer and fewer trees.*

*“I must be losing my strength”, the woodcutter thought. He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on.*

*“When was the last time you sharpened your axe?” the boss asked.*

*“Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I've been busy trying to cut trees.”*

Now would be a good time to sharpen your axe and get ready for the next year. If you haven't done so already, set some time aside to prepare for the New Year. (The next two days have ideas and tips on how to do this.)

## New Year Gratitude



### Quote of the day:

"When it comes to life the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude." — Gilbert K. Chesterton

### Think about it:

At the start of each New Year, most people make their list of resolutions and goals for the year ahead, and move on without taking time to complete the past year. They miss out on the tremendous power of gratitude for all that was accomplished and learned.

If you really want to get the New Year off to a brilliant and powerful start, take a few minutes to write down all the things you are thankful for that transpired last year. Then, write down all the things you accomplished, as well as all the challenges or obstacles you overcame, along with the qualities you acquired or developed to overcome the obstacles—things such as patience, persistence, courage, humor, etc. Remember to include business, family, personal and spiritual events, both large and small, because it all counts.

After you have completed your list, sit back and bathe in the good feeling of how very blessed you have been this past year.

If you find it's difficult to remember all the things you were grateful for, accomplished and overcame, in the coming year you may find it helpful to use your journal to bring things to remembrance. In my journal I have 12 pages set aside—one for each month. This is where I write down all the accomplishments of the month, big and small, as well as all the things that I am thankful for that month, and the major challenges I overcame or am still working on overcoming. This makes doing the end of the year review a breeze.

## New Year Ritual



### Quote of the day:

“Everyone who got where he is, had to begin where he was.” — Robert Louis Stevenson

### Think about it:

Like I mentioned in the last post, it may seem a little early to be thinking about the New Year, but I wanted you to have enough time to be prepared if you do want to do this as you welcome in the New Year.

What are your goals and wishes for the new year? This can include practical goals as well as wild dreams type things that you have no idea how to make happen. Write these all down on one long list.

This little practice can be a very powerful tool for reinforcing what we want. You could do this on New Year's Eve or any other day you prefer.

Write your wish list for the New Year on a piece of paper. Then light a candle. Review your list of accomplishments, gratitude and overcoming. (See the day above.) Bask in the sense of acknowledgment and gratitude. Now read aloud your wish list for New Year and blow out your candle. You can do this alone or with a friend or two, or partner and take turns.

It is a very powerful exercise to get you started in the right direction for the coming year. If you don't care to play out this little ceremony of sorts, that is not a problem, simply write out your wish list as that works too!

## Share Your Gifts With The World



### Quote of the day:

"It is amazing what happens to us when we start thinking how we can serve others, and when we do, we also begin to think and feel more positively and better about ourselves." — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Everyone on this planet is here for a reason. We all have a purpose in life. Unfortunately, many of us forget who we truly are, and end up thinking that this life is all there is. Remember, you are important, and you are capable of achieving amazing things.

You have unique gifts. Keep in mind that what may not seem like a gift to you, can make a big difference to others. What you may minimize as not very important might be the envy of someone else. Such as a great smile, a welcoming personality, the ability for good conversation. Perhaps less accomplished compared to the ability to understand quantum physics, but they make every day life much more pleasurable.

If you don't already know spend some time before the New Year to discover what your gifts are. If you don't feel you can determine them on your own, then seek the help of others, who can help you recognize your talents. Then share them with the world.



## Shut the Door on Yesterday



### Quote of the day:

"... On the first of January let every man gird himself once more, with his face to the front, and take no interest in the things that were and are past." — Henry Ward Beecher

### Think about it:

In the closing scene of Shakespeare's, *The Tempest*, Prospero says of Alonzo: "Let us not burden our remembrances with a heaviness that's gone!" Vivien Larrimore gives similar advice in her poem, *Keys*.

I've shut the door on yesterday  
Its sorrow and mistakes:  
And now I throw the key away to seek another room  
And furnish it with hope and smiles  
And every springtime bloom.  
I've shut the door on yesterday  
And thrown the key away.  
Tomorrow holds no fears for me,  
Since I have found today.

Why not talk to yourself about the past by saying, "The past is gone. There is nothing I can do to change it. So why waste my strength wrestling with the past when I need all my power to grapple with the vital issues of today!"

## Happy New Year



### Quote of the day:

"Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one." — Author Unknown

### Think about it:

Here's a recipe for a good new year:

*Take twelve fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate; cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, see that these months are freed from all the past. Have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of time.*

*Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many people spoil the entire lot this way), but prepare one day at a time.*

*Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, tolerance, kindness, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing-don't do it), prayer, meditation and one well-selected resolution.*

*Put in about one teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play and a heaping cupful of good humor.*

Happy New Year!