**Motivational Minutes on Adversity from 2011-2014**

**(Also see Attitude and Character files.)**

1. **Adversity**



**Quote of the day:**

“The tragedy can become a blessing, the disadvantage can become an advantage, the failure can become an opportunity and the disappointment can become and appointment**.”** —Eric Butterworth

**Reflection:**

When adversity touches our lives, we tend to see it as something negative. However, it can be a blessing in disguise. Through difficult times, we come to recognize and appreciate the things that have true value in our lives. Just as a tree sheds old leaves when a strong wind shakes its branches, we can shake off old thought patterns and habits when adversity touches us.

Think about a time when you were going through difficulties in your life. How did it affect you?

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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!

Are you 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!

\*\*

1. **The Storm Beaten Tree**

****

**Quote of the day:**

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

**Reflection**:

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.

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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?

\*\*

1. **A Happy Ending**

****

**Quote of the day:**

"A happy ending depends on where you stop your story." — Orson Welles

**Reflection**:

The following quote from an unknown author goes right along with these 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!

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.

\*\*

1. **Staying Flexible**



**Quote of the day:**

“As I started to picture the trees in the storm, the answer began to dawn on me. The trees in the storm don't try to stand up straight and tall and erect. They allow themselves to bend and be blown with the wind. They understand the power of letting go. Those trees and those branches that try too hard to stand up strong and straight are the ones that break.” — Julia Butterfly Hill

**Reflection:**

Sometimes, true strength is staying flexible and flowing with the circumstances; it’s letting go when situations beyond your reach change. If your character and your spirit are planted on solid ground, you will not be blown away. You can stay firm in your convictions and your values, yet bendable and free to go with the flow when necessary, at the same time.

Do you sometimes feel like certain things in your life are too difficult? Are you having a hard time accepting some new situation or conditions in your life? Take a moment to think about it. Ask yourself if there is anything you need to let go of in order to bend and flow with the circumstances, then you’ll find the needed strength to carry on.

\*\*

1. **Every End Is a New Beginning**



**Quote of the day**:

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

**Reflection**:

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?

\*\*

1. **Don’t Give Up**



**Quote of the day:**

“How long should you try? Until.” —Jim Rohn

**Reflection:**

I was watching some children play. The older boy, about seven, was running and yelled out, “Don't give up! Keep going! Don't give up!” He yelled again over his shoulder to his younger sister, probably about five, who seemed about to give up in what was apparently a race between them. “Don't stop now! You have to get to the finish line!”

It reminded me of a scene from the film *Chariots of Fire*, where Eric Liddell, one of the runners in a 440-yard race leading up to the 1924 Olympics, was bumped by another runner and fell. As all of the other runners passed him, you can only imagine what must have gone through his mind in that moment. If it was me it might have gone like this, “Give up! You have lost! Don't bother to finish the race!” Instead, Liddell picked himself up, got back on the track, and ran as though he was destined to win—and he did!

Have you been pushed down in the race of life? Get up, you can still get back on track and run. It's never too late to get up and try again. Determine to finish the course, the great race of life, and you just might win like Liddell did.

\*\*

1. **Coinage of Character**



**Quote of the day:**

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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **Stick With Your Dreams**

****

**Quote of the day:**

“Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do.” — Ella Fitzgerald

**Reflection:**

Stick with your dreams no matter how crazy they may seem.

*Josephine Cochrane was a socialite, who, in 1886, had servants to wash her fine china. The servants were clumsy 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.*

What dreams do you need to stick to?

\*\*

1. **My Troubles Are Experiences**



**Quote of the day**:

“If you will call your troubles experiences, and remember that every experience develops some latent force within you, you will grow vigorous and happy, however adverse your circumstances may seem to be.” — John Heywood

**Reflection:**

When I heard the following story, it reminded me of the above quote.

*Ben is a white-haired man with a cheerful demeanor and lively personality making him a joy for me to be around, despite our age difference.*

*One day Ben had a bad fall that brought on a stroke. I went to visit Ben in the hospital. Anticipating a sad, sullen man greeting me from his wheelchair, to my surprise I was met by a smile. Ben waved me over to his chair with his usual enthusiasm. His speech was slow and halting and he was noticeably in some pain, but Ben’s glowing smile never faded. How could he still be so upbeat after such a debilitating accident?*

*As if he knew what I was thinking, Ben touched my arm and said, “You know, my dad is already 100 years old, but he’s stronger than I am. Recently he fell down a flight of stairs. Most people his age would have died instantly or at least suffered permanent injury. Not Dad! Instead, he immediately got up and walked back up the stairs. I may not have my dad’s physical strength,” Ben continued, “but I can share his strength of spirit! I’m getting back up again!”*

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. Ben chose not to give up and so can we.

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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 quiter?

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **Learn From Your Failures**



**Quote of the day**:

“Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger...for the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and grief's we endure help us in our marching onward.” — Henry Ford

**Reflection:**

We can use every experience in our past, whether it was a failure or a success, to learn from. Therefore, when you fail, don't be discouraged, as there is certain to be something positive you can take from it.  
  
Make a list of three so called failures you've experienced in your life and write down at least one positive thing that you've learned from each.

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **It Came To Pass**



**Quote of the day**:

“Nothing is permanent in this wicked world--not even our troubles.” — Charlie Chaplin

**Reflection:**

I love the beach and watching the waves roll up on the shore. They remind me of the peaceful beauty of God's creation, and the gentle, repetitive sight and sound of the surf rolling onto the sand which sooths my spirit. I also like the big waves that crash against the rocks or are blown up by the wind. When thinking about this, it dawned on me that most big waves are the result of winds and turbulence out at sea. There is continual movement as each wave builds over time and distance picking up speed and breaking on the shore when it reaches the shallows. The wave stretches along the warm sand until it is just a thin sheet. Then, slowly and silently, it retreats back into the sea. On and on it goes—building, breaking, spreading, and returning out to sea in an endless cycle.

The winds of adversity can create some pretty big waves but it helps to remember that they are only for a time and are not permanent. Just like the waves of the sea, each trouble we face will run its course, break, retreat, and fade away.

\*\*

1. **Shake It Off and Step Up**



**Quote of the day**:

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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **Don’t Stop**



**Quote of the day:**

“I’m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.” — Steve Jobs

**Reflection:**

According to the noble creed of clover collectors, each leaf represents something: the first leaf, hope; the second, faith; the third, love; and the fourth, not surprisingly, good fortune.

Have you ever tried to find a four leaf clover? Well, from experience they are not easy to find as it has been estimated that there are approximately ten thousand three-leaf clovers for every one four-leaf clover. However, the secret to finding one is don’t stop looking till you find one.

Do ten thousand-to-one odds scare you? Well, Edison had two thousand failures before he invented the light bulb. But it only took one success to start lighting up the whole world.

Whether it’s clovers or success or love you’re looking for, determine that you won’t stop until your fingers have closed around your goal. Maybe the very next one will be it.

\*\*

1. **Two Frogs**



**Quote of the day:**

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” — Albert Einstein

**Reflection:**

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?

\*\*

1. **Bring it On**

****

**Quote of the day:**

“Let the lightening pass, let the thunder roll, let the strong wind blow, let the trouble come, let the heart break fall, if it will make me strong. Bring it on!” — Curtis Chapman

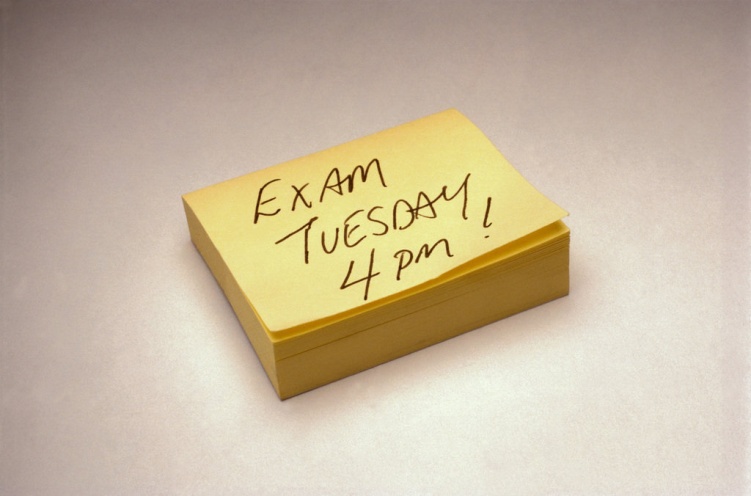
**Reflection:**

I was doing some house cleaning the other day while listening to some music and the song “Bring It On” by Curtis Chapman came on. It reminded me of a friend of mine who used to have a sign in a picture frame on her desk with the words BRING IT ON. She is a firm believer, as am I, that adversity is good for you and that sign was to remind her of that. I haven’t thought of that in a while as she relocated and I haven’t seen her in years.

What a wonderful attitude to look at adversity in such a positive way, knowing that it will make you better. I’m thinking I will make myself a “Bring It On” sign to remind me of the same. How about you? What can you do to remind yourself that adversity serves a purpose and is for good?

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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 Sliver 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.

\*\*

1. **Turn Your Burden Into A Bridge**



**Quote of the day:**

“It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it.” — Lena Horne

**Reflection:**

A biologist tells how he watched an ant carrying a piece of straw which seemed way too big a burden for the tiny creature. The ant came to a crack in the earth which was too wide for it to cross. It stood for a time as though pondering the situation, then put the straw across the crack and walked over it to the other side.

This is a good lesson as we go into the new year. A man's burden can be turned into a bridge for his progress. Take time to reflect on what things you feel are weighing you down in your life. How are you carrying the heavy load? How can you transform your burden into a bridge for you to cross over to better things?

\*\*

1. **The Thought of Triumph**



**Quote of the day**:

“We develop our character muscles by overcoming challenges and obstacles.” — Stephen Covey

**Reflection:**

Life can sometimes be compared to climbing a mountain. It can sometimes be hard and tough. However, the rugged climb doesn't dissuade the determined mountain climber; he revels in the challenge. Nothing can stop him from pressing on until he reaches his goal. No adversity can cause him to turn back. When he looks at the steep cliffs ahead, he doesn't focus on the danger, but on the toeholds and narrow rock ledges that will take him to the peak. He isn't held back by the harshness of his surroundings or the toll the climb is taking on his body; he is propelled onward and upward by the thought of triumph.

There are many obstacles to surmount in life, but each one you conquer is another one behind you and has strengthened your character.

What mountain are you climbing today? Keep your eyes on the summit and you will soon be there.

**\*\***

1. **Crisis**



**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

**Reflection:**

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?

\*\*

1. **Opportunity In Disguise**



**Quote of the day:**

“Opportunity often comes disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat.” — Napoleon Hill

**Reflection:**

*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, 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 adverted 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?

\*\*

1. **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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **Mistakes**

****

**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

**Reflection:**

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.

\*\*

1. **Failure**



**Quote of the day:**

“Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end. Failure is something we can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.” — Denis Waitley

**Reflection:**

When we have made a mistake or failed at something, the image of our supposed failure often keeps replaying in our minds. It’s not always easy to get past our error and make peace with ourselves, but it is well worth the effort to try.

When your mind is tempted to replay thoughts of failure over and over, try turning those thoughts around. You can train your thoughts to take a positive stance over a negative one by translating “failure” into “teacher”, “delay” into “detour”, “possibility for change”, or “the satisfaction of knowing at least you tried.” You’ll be surprised how putting this simple advice into practice will turn a would-be disaster into a positive experience. Try it. You’ll come out all-the-better for it in the end.

\*\*

1. **Opportunities**



**Quote of the day:**

"When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us." — Alexander Graham Bell  
  
**Reflection:**

I understand it can be difficult not to dwell on the regrets when we've worked long and hard for something and it didn’t work out the way we had hoped. However, if we continue to think about all the "what if’s" and "what could have been" we may very well miss the new opportunities that are in front of us.   
  
If this is the case with you, start looking at the future instead of the past. Make a list of three past things you should stop dwelling on and make an effort to do so. Then start looking around for the “open door” and the opportunities you have been missing by dwelling on the past, and go for them.

\*\*

1. **Be Prepared**

****

**Quote of the day:**

“The will to win is important, but the will to prepare is vital.” — Joe Paterno

**Reflection:**

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 had wallowed in his adversity and hadn't instead 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.

\*\*

1. **Learn From the Hurdler**



**Quote of the day:**

“The best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time.” — Abraham Lincoln

**Reflection:**

So often we worry about the future and all our possible problems and obstacles. It would be far better and more efficient if we would only focus on the ones right in front of us.

Remember a hurdler must clear the hurdles one at a time. If he worries about the ones that are still many yards ahead, he is likely to lose his focus on the hurdle coming up.

You can learn from the hurdler. Take your problems one at a time rather than trying to leap over all of them at once.

\*\*

1. **Criticism**



**Quote of the day**:

“Don’t be distracted by criticism. Remember the only taste of success some people have is when they take a bite out of you." — Zig Ziglar

**Reflection:**

*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.