

Volume 2, Issue 2

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

## SEE THE GOOD

Bringing good out of bad

### **Overcoming Depression**

The story of a young woman who battled depression

### **Parenting from the Heart**

Take time to laugh and love



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# FROM THE EDITOR

Who doesn't get discouraged from time to time? Sometimes stressful and genuine trying circumstances are the cause, but it can also start over some small things—a little disappointment or mistake, a careless remark by a friend or coworker, or a negative thought about ourselves or our situation—but how it can grow!

Soon everything seems wrong and our outlook becomes so clouded that we want to quit. We wish we could find a hole, crawl into it, and shut out the world. When this happens, the next while can be quite difficult, but thankfully, it often isn't long before something or someone comes along to help us get back on track.

Whatever the cause may have been, the real problem is that the longer we continue in a negative vein, the deeper we sink, and the harder it is to pull out of it. Worse yet, if we habitually give in to feelings of discouragement, it can lead to depression, and depression is a killer! It devastates the lives of those who are overcome by it, and it can have an overwhelming impact on loved ones and others who can't help but be affected.

For those of us who are prone to discouragement or depression, there are two things important to remember: Learning to recognize the negative thoughts that cause depression is half of the battle against it; learning to take action against that negative input by focusing on and believing the positive is the other!—And if we do both, victory is guaranteed!

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

## Saved by the Whistler

By Zig Ziglar, Creators Syndicate, adapted

**R.P. Miller**, a friend and neighbor of mine, is a semi-retired air conditioning technician who has an interesting story.

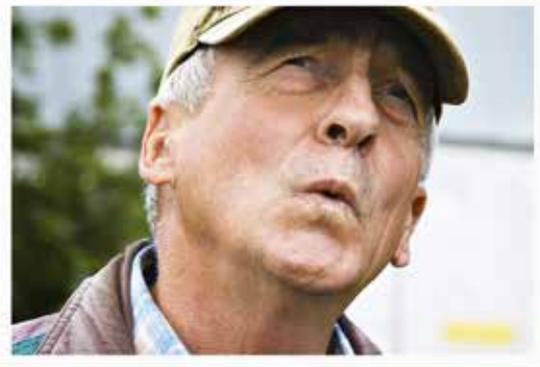
In 1958, R.P. accidentally shot himself. The damage to his calf and other parts of his leg was extensive. When he arrived at the hospital they could not detect a pulse, so they started blood transfusions in both arms and both legs simultaneously. During his ordeal, R.P. used a total of 19 pints of blood.

He ended up spending 42 days in the hospital and 32 hours on the operating table. His doctor told him there was a possibility that one day, using crutches, he might be able to struggle across the room. This put R.P. in the dumps—and then something happened.

In those days, hospitals were not air conditioned, so the windows were open in warm weather.

As R.P. was bemoaning his situation, he heard a happy whistle through his window. He looked out on the street and saw a one-legged man on crutches, just whistling his heart out. That whistle took R.P. out of his “pity party” mode and made him realize that if that man, with only one leg, could whistle that happily, he would look at his situation differently.

Persistent effort and a new attitude made a huge difference for R.P. After a



few months, he went back to work with his old company on a desk job, but he wanted to be active, so he persuaded his company to get a helper to carry his toolbox and convinced them he could do the rest.

Today, R.P. enjoys life and has only the slightest trace of his 1958 accidental shooting. He will always be grateful for the whistler who he says literally saved his life.

There are some things in life we can't change. We may suffer irreplaceable losses at times, but we can choose to either lament our losses, or do as the whistler did—rejoice over what we still have.

R.P. Miller's turnaround in attitude started with a whistle by an exuberant whistler—it made a huge difference in his life journey. Are we living our life in such a way that others who are down in the dumps might find the courage they need to move ahead—to get over their self-pity? Are we a living example of beating the odds, or being happy in spite of our present circumstances? Do we choose the high road? If not, why not?

The loneliest times are the ones we spend dwelling in the darkness of self-absorption. So let's go out of our way to be an encouragement to others. ✨



# Hope Eternal

By Ardis Whitman, adapted

**H**ope is the mechanism that keeps the human race tenaciously alive and dreaming, planning, and building. Hope is not the opposite of realism. It is the opposite of cynicism and despair. The best of humanity has always hoped when there was no way, lived what was unlivable, and managed to build when there was little to build on.

“A merry heart does good like a medicine,” says the proverb. This ancient knowledge has gained new confirmation in our time. It was found after World War II, for example, that prisoners of war who had been convinced that they would come out alive, and focused on life as it was to be in the future, emerged with much less damage than those who felt they would never go home again.

Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, of the University of Pennsylvania, has done much research on the causes of depression, the disorder that affects millions every year. He found that depressed people regard every minor obstacle as an impassable barrier. Responding to anything is felt to be useless because “nothing I do matters.”

Successful therapy, he told me, starts when we begin to believe again that we can be effective human beings and can control our lives.

We hope as naturally as the seeds sprout and the sun rises, and perhaps for the same reasons. But natural and vital as hope may be, we can lose it.

Precisely because hope is in the natural flow of life, it is unleashed naturally by removing the abnormal impediments that block it. Here are some suggestions:

### **Hope for the moment.**

There are times when it is hard to believe in the future, when we are temporarily just not brave enough.

When this happens, concentrate on the present. Cultivate “le petit bonheur” (the little happiness) until courage returns. Look forward to the beauty of the next moment, then the next hour. Sink roots into the present until the strength grows to think about tomorrow.

**Take action.** “When I can’t see any way out,” a stranger wrote me some years ago, “I do something anyway.” This is good advice to anyone paralyzed by despair.

## *When hope dies, what else lives?*

—Ama Ata Aidoo (1942- ), Ghanaian writer.

**Believe in hope.** Don't be persuaded that the pessimists have a corner on truth. These people would rather live in the fog of skepticism than chance disappointment. It is the adult in us, not the child, which, when knocked down, gets up again and says against the odds,

“Tomorrow will be better.” Hope is not a lie, but the truth itself.

So, summon hope. It is as right as spring sunlight. It is a goal in itself, an exercise in gallantry, a frame of mind, a style of life, a climate of the heart. ✨

## See the **Good** by Maria Fontaine

### Bringing good out of bad

Everyone has times in their lives that they look upon as “dark nights”. — Tragedies or difficulties that are largely beyond their control and sometimes the direct result of other people's wrong choices or unloving actions. How people react to those wrongs determines whether they become bitter or better for them.

Those who have a hard time seeing any good in the difficult times they've been through usually become resentful and make themselves even more unhappy. Perhaps they were wronged, but if they love God and know that He loves them, He could have and will use those situations for their good in some way if they will let Him.

God may be trying to use those circumstances to help them in some way, but they've missed the point or haven't benefited as He intended. It's very possible that in many of these cases that people look back on as “mistakes,” the circumstances were used or even engineered by God in order to bring out the best in them, to teach them something valuable, or even just as a test. So even when bad things happen,

He can and will turn anything to good, if we'll let Him.

Finding the good in a bad situation isn't just a good idea; it's vital to our emotional and mental health. If we can't accept that there could be a silver lining to some of the rain clouds of our past, then we'll probably never fully forgive and forget those things, and that can lead to bitterness, which is severely debilitating to our spirit.

For this reason it's vital that we not allow ourselves to look back at any situation, no matter how terrible it was, remembering only the bad. It may not be our favorite memory, it may even be painful, but if we'll reject the negative spin and ask God specifically how He would like to use that situation for good, then He can set us free from that bitterness or other ill feelings and bring about beautiful victories.

What greater triumph is there than to bring good out of bad? That's the ultimate way to conquer our past hurts—not by bitterness and thoughts of revenge, but by allowing God to make us better on account of it. ✨



# Overcoming Depression

—The **Story** of a young woman  
who battled **depression**

By **Bethy Amsterdam**

**B**eginning in my early teen years, I battled depression a lot. In my late teens and early 20s, it just got worse. It seemed that every attack of depression I had was stronger in intensity and lasted longer than the previous one, till my last attack of depression lasted over four weeks.

I was never able to pinpoint the exact trigger for my depression, or find any pattern in determining how or why it would come on. It would seem to come on with no warning, and I felt like ten thousand tons of bricks just fell on me and I couldn't get out from under them no matter what I tried. I would usually try to keep up on my work and struggle through, despite how I was feeling, and tried to ignore it.

But as the attacks increased in frequency and severity, I found it impossible to carry on with business as usual, as the way depression would manifest itself was very strong. I felt like my personality would completely change, and the things I enjoyed or normally liked to do, I had no desire for or interest in. I would be extremely listless for weeks at a time. Apathetic

is probably the best description of my feelings about things.

My depression got to the point that it was pretty physically debilitating. All I wanted to do all day was sleep, because then I didn't have to think about anything and it was the only time I was happy. My attention span on a day-to-day basis was extremely short. I would have great difficulty focusing on anything or being productive. I tried to stay away from people as much as I could. It was pretty rough.

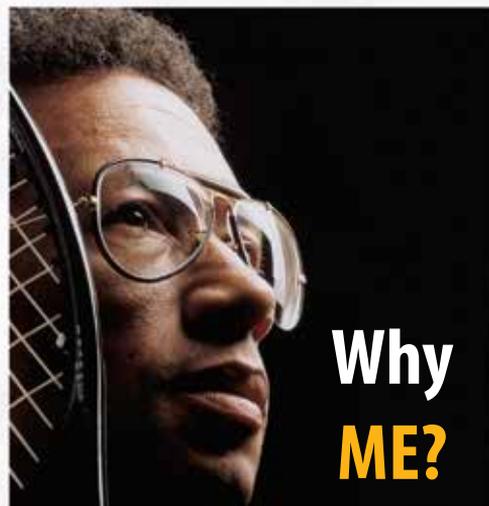
For years, I just sort of weathered these attacks of depression I experienced. They would always eventually pass and the clouds would lift—whether in a few days or a few weeks—and I was always very grateful when that happened. It took me a few years to figure out that what I was going through was actually depression. After I found my efforts to make it “go away” were unsuccessful, I eventually convinced myself that my proclivity to depression was hereditary, and that it was actually a physical chemical imbalance of some sort, and that I would have to battle it for the rest of my

life—as a sort of continual besetting weakness of some sort. However, I soon found out that this condition wasn't beyond God's healing power.

A close friend, whose counsel I highly value, was understandably alarmed by my fatalistic approach to the very bad attack of depression I was having. He explained to me that depression was a mental sickness, and just like we would ask for help if we were suffering a debilitating physical illness, we should be willing to ask for help against a mental sickness also. This was sort of a new thought for me.

While I was still feeling quite oppressed by that particular attack of depression, another friend and co-worker talked with me and explained what he'd learned in fighting against depression and discouragement. The main point that he stressed to me was that depression can be overcome, and that I needed to fight against it and not just passively accept it. Then he prayed with me and asked God to heal me, and from that moment on, the cloud and weight of depression that I felt left me.

I was completely delivered from the hold depression had in my life. In the four or five years since, I have not had a similar attack of depression. That is a great miracle, considering I would often have them every few months or certainly every six months. I have still had to battle with attacks of discouragement from time to time, but I have been freed from the grip that depression used to have on me. I am so grateful, and I credit it all to the power of prayer! ✨



Arthur Ashe, the legendary Wimbledon player, was dying of a blood infection, which he got due to infected blood he received during a heart surgery in 1983. From the world over, he received letters from his fans, one of which conveyed, "Why does God have to select you for such a bad disease?"

To this Arthur replied, "The world over, 50,000,000 children start playing tennis every year, 5,000,000 learn to play tennis, 500,000 learn professional tennis, 50,000 come to the circuit, 5,000 reach the great slam, 50 reach Wimbledon, 4 reach the semi-finals, 2 to the finals. When I was holding the cup, I never asked God, 'Why me?' So today in pain I should not be asking God, 'Why me?' either." ✨

# Pulling It All **Together**

By Asad Rafi, Pakistan

**“If you put your mind to something, hold onto your faith and inner strength and just stay focused, you can accomplish anything.”**



I have Ataxia. There are various types of Ataxia and the one affecting me is known as Friedrich's Ataxia. F.A. is a rare neurological disorder that affects speech, balance, and coordination. It is an inherited genetic disease, and people with F.A. need support to walk or get around, from e.g. a stick, scooter, or wheelchair.

In my fight against F.A. it has been very important for me to stay active and exercise on a regular basis. My exercise includes swimming, going to the gym, and physiotherapy. After a period of about one year, my efforts paid off and recently I started to walk again with the use of parallel bars. It really feels great to be up on my feet again and to feel more confidence in my legs as I take steps. To be able to walk again has been my ultimate goal, and being able to do so without too much discomfort shows that I am heading in the right direction.

Despite the progress, I've been feeling low and frustrated lately for no particular reason. The general facts of being unable to do anything without someone helping me, not being able to play outdoor sports, like cricket or tennis, and being unable to dance or go for a drive on my own were getting me down.

After feeling frustrated and negative for a while I realized that it was time for me to remind myself that my advantages definitely outweigh my disadvantages. After all, what I had learned most since being diagnosed with Ataxia was to have a lot of will power, to keep a positive attitude and remember that God always compensates things. So I started to compare myself positively to others who are less fortunate than me:

The fact that despite being confined to a wheelchair I was able to achieve things that many people who are able to get around normally never have, gives me a sense of purpose. For example, I am able to swim very well, something which many non-handicapped people are not able to do.

My circumstances are also so much better than countless other people out there. I am able to afford many good things in life, which many are not blessed with, and I thank God for that.

I am able to work in an impressive office, and I have close and caring friends, which are further blessings that many do not enjoy.

Above all, the thing that has helped me most has been my faith in God and my times communicating with Him.

So counting my blessings and remembering what I have been able to do and achieve in life despite my handicap once again helped me rise above my feelings of frustration and depression.

My handicap has taught me how to be happy. We only live once, and we should try to make the most of it. The ability to struggle for something, even though we may never achieve it, is of foremost importance. This has been my main focus in life, along with always looking at the positive side of things.

In conclusion, here is a saying that has helped me tremendously: "If you put your mind to something, hold onto your faith and inner strength and just stay focused, you can accomplish anything." ✨

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# Take Time to Laugh and Love

By Sara Kelley

**M**y three youngest girls were so excited. We had planned a beach outing for a week, and the day had finally come. Then at the last minute, I asked a friend to go in my place because I had so much housework to do. At least this will be a great chance to do all those things I haven't been able to get to, I thought, as I gathered play clothes to wash, my sewing kit, and mending.

A few minutes later, from the window, I saw the kids' ride come, then drive away with those excited, happy kids. They waved at me and called out, "Bye, Mommy! Have fun today!"

Fun?! If they only knew all my plans for the day, I thought. It's odd, though, how I usually end up doing much less than I had hoped to when I skip out on playtime and replace it with projects, errands, and cleaning.

As I sat there, I kept thinking of sandcastles and laughing children. How they all love splashing and falling into the water! They hadn't been gone an hour yet, and I already missed them and was looking forward to the stories they would have when they got back.

I greeted the girls at the car when my friend dropped them off. "Thanks so much for taking them," I said. "I just had so much to do at home..."

"But Mom's too busy to have fun," my youngest interrupted.



Then it was bath time. The three girls piled into the tub together, and I went about my usual routine—get out their clean clothes, drop the sandy ones in the laundry basket, pick up the stuff they'd left on the floor. All the while those words kept ringing in my mind, *Mom's too busy to have fun.*

"We made the best sandcastle today—ever!" Kareema announced. "You should have seen it, Mommy. You would have taken a picture!"

I grabbed a can of shaving cream from the bathroom counter. "How's this for a really nice castle?" I asked, as my foam art creation rose to an impressive height on the bathtub rim. You should have seen their big eyes widen!

Next we all took turns spraying tall white wigs onto our hair, writing our names extra fancy on the tiled wall, and forming long poufy shaving cream beards. White sudsy foam was everywhere. All the while, we passed around a camera and took turns taking photos that we'll enjoy forever.

Fun?! We laughed together until our sides ached.

Dinner was a bit late that night, and as usual, I didn't get to all the projects and errands I had planned that busy day.

There will always be work to be done, but I realize now how much kids both need and appreciate those unexpected surprises—and so do I. ✨

# The Mirror

by Julia Kelly



I woke up one morning to a perfect day, the kind that begged me to run outside, and soak up the splendor of the early morning rays. But this day I barely glanced out the window. I ignored the image of perfection and headed straight to the mirror. I didn't like what I saw.

For months I had been holding up a mirror in front of me. I don't know where I found this mirror, but one day I had glanced into it and from that point on I couldn't put it down. This mirror was always there, forever reminding me of all my imperfections. It never left me alone.

The sun was shining brightly outside, but there were dark rain clouds over my mind. Everything that happened to me seemed to confirm that no one cared or even noticed me. I looked in my mirror, and it told me that there was nothing about me to like. I had too many faults to be loved or happy. I watched the laughter, the smiles, and the happy experiences of others, but only from a distance as I sat in my little corner and peered around my mirror. How can they be so happy? Don't they notice me? Don't they see how miserable I am?

Every time I tried to venture out of my little corner, my mirror screamed at me that it was no use. It would throw my reflection back at me, and I sank further and further into the dark abyss of

negativity and hopelessness.

Then it occurred to me. Why not just cover up the mirror? Yes, I have faults. Yes, I'll never be perfect. Yes, I'll always make mistakes. So what? I can't live my life ignoring all hope of happiness just because I don't have every good quality I wish I had. I'll ignore the mirror, and see how much happier I'll be!

It took a great deal of effort, but I finally did cover up the mirror. I was uncomfortable at first with the thought that people could possibly accept me just the way I was—faults, failings, and all. I soon realized, though, that the more I let myself just be myself, and the more I reached out to others, the happier I became. The dark rain clouds over my head were replaced by bright, warm rays of blessed, lasting peace.

The mirror is still there. It never goes away, but I keep it out of sight. I'll never be exactly the way I wish I were, but I do have much to give to others.—And I can't do that when I'm staring into the mirror.

When I woke up this morning, cold rain was coming down in torrents. Thunder was rumbling, and I couldn't see the sun for the black clouds. It was a miserable morning outside, but sunshine and blue skies were in my heart.

Today was perfect! ✨

# Through the Storm

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope. —Martin Luther King

Fall seven times, stand up eight.  
—Japanese proverb

The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it. Skillful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.  
—Epictetus

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.  
—Chinese proverb

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. —Saint Francis de Sales

Good humor is a tonic for mind and body. It is [an] antidote for anxiety and depression. It is a business asset. It attracts and keeps friends. It lightens human burdens. It is the direct route to serenity and contentment. —Greenville Kleisser

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

Even the darkest night will end, and the sun will rise.—Victor Hugo