

Volume 5, Issue 7

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

## Lights Will Guide Me Home

Starting Over

Coping with  
Grief and Loss

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Give light

The challenges many people face today are immense. Broken relationships, financial uncertainties, serious illness, loss, and other seemingly insurmountable obstacles are plaguing multitudes, tempting many to give up on life. Yet there are also astonishing stories about how treasure and light immersed out of the darkness.

While each life is unique, and it may sometimes feel as though there is no way out from overwhelming circumstances, there is always hope. Even though it may not seem like it at times, there is no situation ever too difficult to overcome, no darkness ever so intense that it can conquer the light.

The articles in this issue of *Motivated* offer hope in the midst of the darkness so prevalent in our world today. As you read these articles, and continue the journey before you, I hope you will find assurance that even in darkness a light still shines, and that you will feel motivated to reach out to those around you who may need a hand to help lift them from despair.

There is always a light at the end of every tunnel!

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

**Issue Editor**

Motivated Vol 5, Issue 7  
Christina Lane

**Design**

awexdesign

**Contact Us:**

**Email**  
**Website**

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com  
www.motivatedmagazine.com

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# Lights Will Guide Me Home

By Beth Jordan, adapted



I was driving home one night with the windows rolled down, the wind making a mess of my hair. The radio was playing, but I was mostly absorbed in my own thoughts—that is, until the first words from “Fix You” by Coldplay caught my attention.

*When you try your best, but you don't succeed,*

*When you get what you want, but not what you need,*

*When you feel so tired, but you can't sleep ...*

I began listening to the rest of the song, and it was as if I was listening to a story—my story.

*Lights will guide you home...*

The song ended as I pulled into the driveway. “Lights will guide you home,” I repeated. What a simple yet profound thought. I leaned back and closed my eyes.

I remembered the many times when I'd felt lost, alone, or confused, but then the light of God's love and care

was always there to guide me home. This light has come in many forms—a friend who came to see me at just the right time; my mom or dad; a stranger who shed some new perspective on my life and way of thinking; and, of course, the love of my life, my husband, whose passion for life has many times been like the sun breaking through the clouds on a stormy day.

I realized that this light has always shone on my heart. It has never turned off, never run out of power, never dimmed. It has always been there to guide me home. It is a beacon of hope, a guiding light showing me the way to walk to reach my destination and fulfill my destiny; a warm glow that keeps me feeling loved when I may feel unlovely. Whenever I look up and away from what surrounds me, I can feel the light and its brilliance.

Every single time I've stopped and looked up, the light has guided me home—and I know it always will. ◆



# Starting Over

## Kyrsten Bean's story

**T**hree years ago, I was laid off from my first publishing job at age 26. My husband and I had to move out of our apartment, to the next city over to stay in the house my grandparents built in the 50's. I was on a number of medications for back pain and depression. Daily life had become so complicated that I needed uppers to combat the downers, sleeping aids, and anti-depressants.

I was miserable. I spent a year slowly tapering off the meds (with no help from my doctor, who had consigned me to a life of pills) and finally checked into a facility to help me get off the last of them. The next year was very hard, as my body adjusted to being on nothing for the first time in years. I struggled with strange symptoms and syndromes, but nothing was as horrible as being on the medication.

I couldn't find work for quite some time. I started volunteering at an organic for-profit kitchen. I gained confidence when I met people who didn't judge me for what I'd been through. I also started working with local newspapers on their directories of businesses. I spent my days taking photographs and interviewing business owners in my community. I got the opportunity to work in my own city on the directory.

The editor liked my work so much he gave me a stab at writing freelance articles. A writer my whole life, this was my first published work. I was delighted. Now, I work for the paper part-time and am focusing hard on a goal of full-time freelance writing.

If you would have told me a couple of years ago when I was deep in it that I would be writing for a paper, developing my freelance writing skills, writing music again, submitting poetry, and be completely involved in my local community, I wouldn't have believed you. I had none of these things in the dark times.

There was no overnight transformation for me. It was a slow shift. I learned how to breathe instead of popping a pill, and my life grew from there. I also read stories on line that reminded me to let go. I know there are many people who are stuck where I was. Laid off, maybe on medications, not doing what they came here to do with their lives.

I love to help people, and I aim to do so with my writing. Currently I am pain and depression free, and doing what I've always wanted to do due to a slow, gradual paradigm shift back to my true nature. I've made friends and opened my mind to life again. ◆

# Starting Over

## Raquel Galford's story

There was a defining moment when my life shifted dramatically. I worked in an office with the same co-workers for 15 years. We had been through marriages, deaths, births, and graduations together. We were like a small family. I loved the comfort that this familiarity offered me.

However, I made a decision that would change this forever.

My co-workers purchased a winning lottery ticket worth 170 million dollars. I did not choose to play with them due to my home circumstances. My husband, now my ex-husband, wouldn't work, so I was trying to make it on one income, and my child wanted to play soccer. It took all I had to scrape up the amount I needed to get by.

Money often changes people. Everyone who won left the office. I was devastated. I couldn't function. My marriage was falling apart. My husband was so angry with me for not playing. He was addicted to gambling. I had no idea he had been taking my credit card and getting cash advances for over a year. I felt as if my entire life had fallen apart. I wallowed in self-pity for a long time.

Then one day, I had had enough. I pulled myself up off the ground, filed for divorce and got a second job so I could

buy groceries so we could eat. The road I chose has not been easy. Being a single mom, working two jobs, taking care of bills and the house is very hard at times.

There are days I feel overwhelmed, but then I look at my son and I remember why I do it.

Since my divorce, I have written a children's book, which has been published, I have discovered a talent for making jewelry and I have worked with an organization that provides free care for Palestinian children who live in refugee camps in Gaza.

I am amazed that out of so much sadness and pain I emerged a better person than I was before. I now appreciate the fact that people enter and leave our lives. We are not promised that they get to stay forever. They are on loan to us. I am still learning to like change. It's a journey that I have chosen to take. ◆



# How to Survive a Personal Crisis

**E**xperiencing a personal crisis can make you feel as though your life is spinning out of control. Whether you are mourning the loss of a long-term relationship, or you've just learned that your job is in jeopardy, there are some things you can do to get through this period of time and begin to be a survivor in your own eyes.

Here's how:

## **1. Be determined.**

Decide right now that you will get through this personal crisis. Your life may not be the same as it was before. Some of the changes you are going through may indeed be permanent, but be determined that you will emerge from these circumstances stronger than ever before. Decide today that you will be a survivor.

## **2. Find support.**

You are not alone. There are many people who have experienced situations similar to yours. Seek out a support group or share your experiences in a forum. Also, seek out the support of those around you. The personal crisis you're going through is a time to lean on your friends and family for support. If you're concerned that they're too quick to try and "fix" your situation, remind

them that what you really need right now is someone to listen to you.

## **3. Talk it out.**

Share your feelings openly with someone you trust. It's very important that you express your feelings of sorrow, anger, anxiety, and confusion. If it's helpful to you, keep a journal at this time. You may also want to consider seeking professional help by talking with a counselor or therapist who can help you put these events into perspective and assist you with the coping and decision-making skills you need at this time.

## **4. Take it one day at a time.**

You don't have to have your entire future worked out right now. Just focus on getting through this day. If it helps, break your days into smaller pieces, and focus on getting through just this morning or the next hour.

## **5. Ask for help.**

There are many sources of help around you. Turn to your friends, family, and neighbors. Chances are, they want to help already, but they may not be sure of what you need. Also seek the help of community organizations in your area that are prepared to provide material assistance, counseling, and education.



By Jennifer Wolf, adapted

### **6. Stay active.**

Keep yourself busy with the normal routines of your life. Also, consider being physically active by taking a brisk walk once a day or incorporating some other form of exercise. This can make a huge difference in the way you emotionally and physically deal with stress. Regular exercise also provides a wonderful built-in time for thinking and reflecting. You may find that after a long walk, you feel more clear-headed, and prepared for making important decisions.

### **7. Take care of yourself.**

It is extremely important that you continue to take care of yourself as you cope with this personal crisis. This means getting 7-9 hours of sleep each night and eating a balanced diet. You may also need to teach your body to relax again. Do this by taking some time each day to sit for 5-10 minutes and simply breathe. Repeating this technique each day will become easier, and you will notice a real difference in your state of mind and the amount of tension you hold in your body.

### **8. Manage what you can.**

If you're feeling extremely overwhelmed, focus on one task you

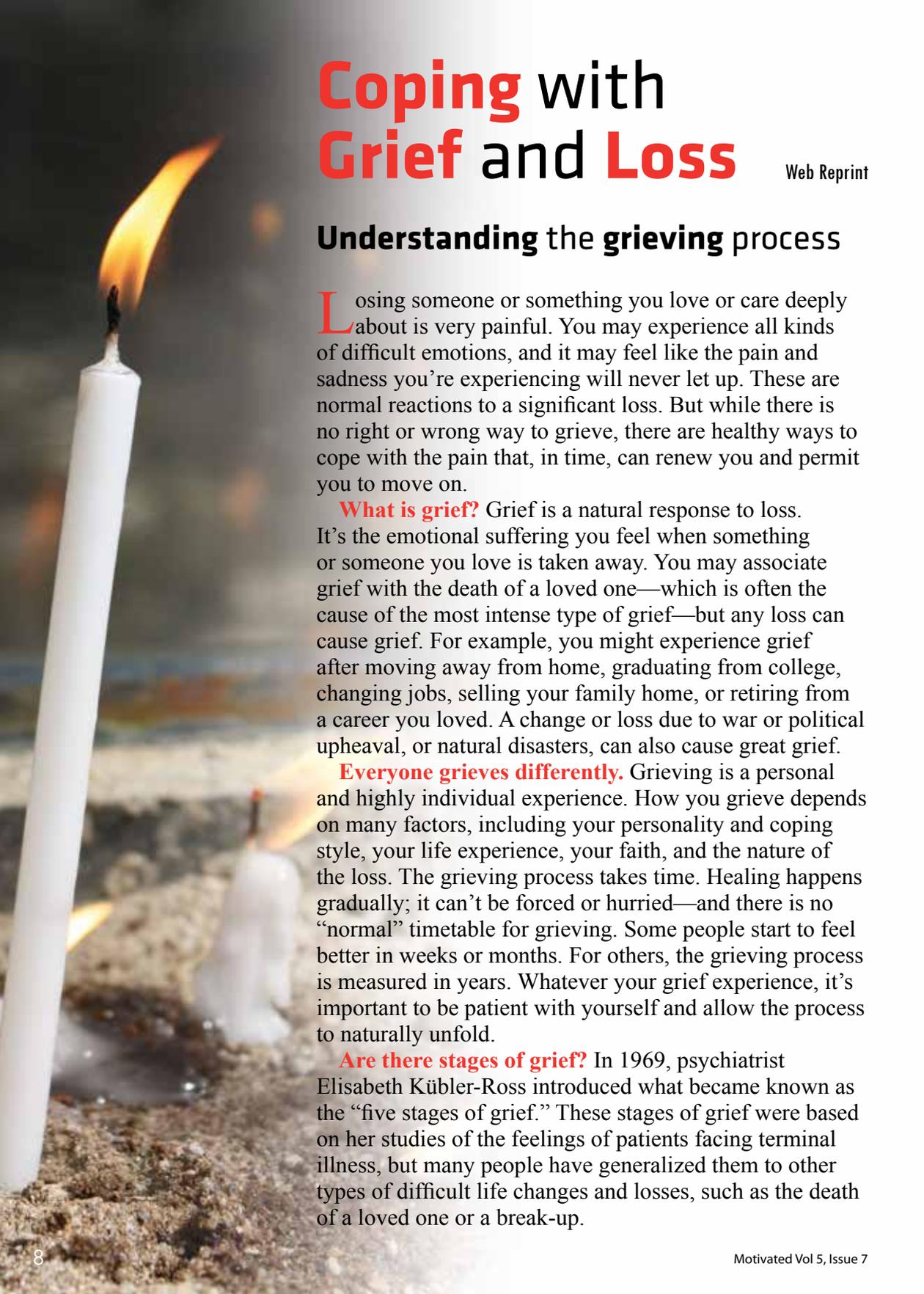
can complete that would make you feel more empowered and in control. This could be as simple as doing the dishes or getting a work-related project out of the way. If everything feels out of control, try setting up a calendar system to keep track of your schedule and events. Seeing your life ahead visually on paper in front of you can help you feel more in control of what's happening.

### **9. Learn to recognize your personal strengths.**

You already possess much of the personal strength you'll need to get through this. What would help you tap into that core strength? Make a list of the strengths you observe about yourself. Be honest. They're really there! If you have trouble with this exercise, ask a friend who knows you well to articulate your strengths for you. Sometimes others see in us amazing qualities that we have yet to recognize.

### **10. Have a positive attitude.**

Remain hopeful about your future. Many people have experienced circumstances similar to yours, and have gone on to lead vibrant, productive, fulfilling lives. You cannot see the future at this time, but deciding now to be hopeful about its prospects will set you on a positive course. ♦

A lit candle in a dark setting, symbolizing grief and loss. The candle is white with a bright yellow flame. The background is dark and out of focus, with another lit candle visible in the distance. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

# Coping with Grief and Loss

Web Reprint

## Understanding the grieving process

**L**osing someone or something you love or care deeply about is very painful. You may experience all kinds of difficult emotions, and it may feel like the pain and sadness you're experiencing will never let up. These are normal reactions to a significant loss. But while there is no right or wrong way to grieve, there are healthy ways to cope with the pain that, in time, can renew you and permit you to move on.

**What is grief?** Grief is a natural response to loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. You may associate grief with the death of a loved one—which is often the cause of the most intense type of grief—but any loss can cause grief. For example, you might experience grief after moving away from home, graduating from college, changing jobs, selling your family home, or retiring from a career you loved. A change or loss due to war or political upheaval, or natural disasters, can also cause great grief.

**Everyone grieves differently.** Grieving is a personal and highly individual experience. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and the nature of the loss. The grieving process takes time. Healing happens gradually; it can't be forced or hurried—and there is no “normal” timetable for grieving. Some people start to feel better in weeks or months. For others, the grieving process is measured in years. Whatever your grief experience, it's important to be patient with yourself and allow the process to naturally unfold.

**Are there stages of grief?** In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced what became known as the “five stages of grief.” These stages of grief were based on her studies of the feelings of patients facing terminal illness, but many people have generalized them to other types of difficult life changes and losses, such as the death of a loved one or a break-up.

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## The five stages of grief:

- **Denial:** “This can’t be happening to me.”
- **Anger:** “Why is this happening? Who is to blame?”
- **Bargaining:** “Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_.”
- **Depression:** “I’m too sad to do anything.”
- **Acceptance:** “I’m at peace with what happened.”

If you are experiencing any of these emotions following a loss, it may help to know that your reaction is natural and that you’ll heal in time. However, not everyone who grieves goes through all of these stages—and that’s okay. Contrary to popular belief, you do not

have to go through each stage in order to heal. In fact, some people resolve their grief without going through any of these stages, and if you do go through these stages of grief, you probably won’t experience them in a neat, sequential order, so don’t worry about what you “should” be feeling or which stage you’re supposed to be in.

The single most important factor in healing from loss is having the support of other people. Even if you aren’t comfortable talking about your feelings under normal circumstances, it’s important to try to express them when you’re grieving. Sharing your loss makes the burden of grief easier to carry. Wherever the support comes from, accept it and do not grieve alone. Connecting to others will help you heal. ♦

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## The Butterfly... ...and other thoughts about life after life

**N**oted journalist Arthur Brisbane once pictured a crowd of grieving caterpillars carrying the corpse of a cocoon to its final resting place. The poor, distressed caterpillars, clad in black raiment, were weeping. The beautiful butterfly, meanwhile, fluttered happily above the muck and the mire of earth, forever freed from its confining shell.

Needless to say, Brisbane had the average funeral in mind. He sought to convey the idea that when our loved ones pass, it is foolish to remember only the cocoon and concentrate our attention on the remains, while forgetting the bright butterfly. —Author Unknown

I am standing on the seashore. A ship spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the ocean. I stand watching her until she fades on the horizon, and someone at my side says,

“It is gone.” Gone where? The loss of sight is in me, not in the vessel. Just at the moment when someone says, “It is gone,” there are others who are watching it coming. Other voices take up the glad shout, “Here it comes!” That is dying. —Author Unknown

Dr. Werner von Braun, well known for his part in pioneering the U.S. space program, said that he had “essentially scientific” reasons for believing in life after death. He explained: “Science has found that nothing can disappear without a trace. Nature does not know extinction. All it knows is transformation. If God applies the fundamental principle to the most minute and insignificant parts of the universe, doesn’t it make sense to assume that He applies it to the masterpiece of His creation—the human soul? I think it does.” ♦



# Paradise Road

A story of shining your light

By Katherine Kehler, adapted

Someone told me once that we influence at least 250 people during our lifetime. Today, with the Internet connecting us with more people, I believe our influence is much greater.

I recently watched a true story featured on the video, *Paradise Road*. It told of a woman who used her influence and training to give a group of women hope, courage, peace, unity, and a reason to keep living.

The women were prisoners of war. They came from diverse backgrounds—high society and farmers. They were from different countries. At first, they didn't trust each other, but as life became more difficult for them, they began to work together.

One woman in particular became a positive force in an amazing way. With her music and organizational abilities, she united the women to form an orchestra. She patiently taught them how to use their voices to sound like instruments. Soon they were able to create a beautiful concert.

She gave them something beautiful to focus on besides their own misery and their horrific surroundings. Every day women died at the hands of their captors or from disease, but the group was able to keep going because of her courage.

Of course, some women wouldn't join the choir and watched from afar, but most followed her lead.

Over half the women in the choir died. One day, when they were having yet another funeral procession, one of the guards asked her, "Where is your choir now?"

Instead of letting his remark discourage her, she picked up two rocks and began banging out a rhythm. Soon others followed her example, using sticks, shoes—whatever they could find. They were an orchestra again and were encouraged. Even those who usually sat and watched joined in the music.

Finally, the war was over and they were set free. This woman had given them hope, courage, and even joy by inspiring them to make something beautiful in dire circumstances.

Now think for a moment about the people we influence. The ones we meet at our local coffee shop, at the supermarket, clothing store, or online, as well as our neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family.

We too, can help people see something beautiful in life, no matter the circumstances, and be a shining light in their world. ♦

# Helping Children Cope with Loss

Adapted Web Reprint

PARENTING  
FROM THE HEART



The following tips can help teachers, parents, and other caregivers support children who have experienced the loss of parents, friends, or loved ones.

- **Give children the opportunity to tell their story** and be a good listener.

- **Don't assume that every child in a certain age group understands death** in the same way, or with the same feelings: All children are different and their view of the world is unique and shaped by different experiences.

- **Grieving is a process, not an event:** Parents, educators, and caregivers need to allow adequate time for each child to grieve in the manner that works for that child. Pressing children to resume “normal” activities without the chance to deal with their emotional pain may prompt additional problems or negative reactions.

- **Don't tell half-truths to children about tragic events:** Children are often bright and sensitive. They will see through false information and wonder why you do not trust them with the truth. Lies do not help the child through the healing process or help develop effective coping strategies for life's future tragedies or losses. Be mindful to tell the truth in a child friendly manner.

- **Don't assume that children always grieve in an orderly or predictable way:** We all grieve in different ways and there is no one “correct” way for people to move through the grieving process.

- **Let children know that you really want to understand** what they are feeling or what they need: Sometimes children are upset but they cannot tell you what will be helpful. Giving them the time and encouragement to share their feelings with you may enable them to sort out their feelings.

- **Children will need long-lasting support:** This is especially true if they have lost a parent who was their major source of support. Try to develop multiple supports for children who suffer significant losses.

- **Keep in mind that grief work is hard:** It is hard work for adults and hard for children as well.

- **Be aware of your own need to grieve:** Focusing on the children in your care is important, but not at the expense of your own emotional needs. Adults who have lost a loved one will be far more able to help children work through their grief if they get help themselves. For some families, it may be important to seek family grief counseling, as well as individual sources of support. ♦

# Give *light*

When it is dark enough, you can see the stars. –Ralph Waldo Emerson

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

–Martin Luther King, Jr.

How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world. –William Shakespeare

It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light.

–Aristotle Onassis

No matter what you're going through, there's a light at the end of the tunnel. It may seem hard to get to it, but you can do it! Just keep working towards it and you'll find the positive side of things.

–Demi Lovato

Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light. –Helen Keller

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

–Albert Schweitzer

There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it. –Edith Wharton

A smile is the light in your window that tells others that there is a caring, sharing person inside. –Denis Waitley

The difficulties you meet will resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed, and light will dawn, and shine with increasing clearness on your path.

–Jim Rohn

Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself. –Desiderius Erasmus

If everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world this would be.

–Unknown

