

Volume 6, Issue 7

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

## THE RISE OF THE PROBLEM-SOLVER

**How to Win at Life**

**New Roads**



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My 8-year-old grandson loves to play games—all sorts of games, but mostly those he is able to win. From the minute he starts to play, he checks frequently to make sure he is and stays ahead of everyone. When this does not happen, he can get pretty grumpy sometimes, and on occasion he has had a mini-meltdown because he lost.

Of course, nobody likes to lose, and everyone would like to be a winner when it comes to playing games—and in life in general. Most people also love to hear or read about people who are “winners” in their particular fields and situations—doctors who make important advances in medicine, inventors who think of something no one else has, leaders who find solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, sports teams who triumph despite the odds, and the list goes on.

Still, not everyone always wins or achieves a major accomplishment. Sometimes we lose a game, fail at a task, or don't overcome a certain obstacle.

At times like that, it is important to remember, just like I always remind my grandson, that in the game of life we score points by playing with character and commitment, through positive actions and kind words, by having a noble attitude towards those that cross our path, and simply doing the very best with the abilities and skills we have.

When we live like that, we're all winners.

Christina Lane  
*For Motivated*



# To the Finish Line!

Author unknown, adapted

**W**e can find inspiration from the life of John Stephen Akhwari, as told in Bud Greenspan’s book, *100 Greatest Moments in Olympic History*.

When the winner crossed the finish line in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic marathon, the officials and spectators thought that had been the highlight of the race. Then, an hour later, John Stephen Akhwari, a runner from Tanzania, entered the stadium. Bloodied and bandaged from a fall, and with a dislocated knee, he limped painfully.

As Akhwari made his way around the track in the setting sun, the remaining crowd began to cheer loudly. When he crossed the finish line, you would have thought by the roar of the crowd that Akhwari had been the victor.

Later, when asked why he had not dropped out, Akhwari replied, “I don’t think you understand. My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race.”

When you’re bruised and bloodied by life, press on; you were not sent here to start the race, but to finish it!

Dr. A. B. Meldrum put it this way: “Bear in mind, if you are going to amount to anything, that your success does not depend on the brilliancy and the impetuosity with which you take hold, but upon the everlasting and sanctified bull-doggedness with which you hang on after you have taken hold.” Or in other words, “fight up the good fight.” George Matheson was someone else who didn’t quit, despite the onset of blindness. His advice: “We conquer—not in any brilliant fashion—we conquer by continuing.”

Keep going, no matter what the cost. Keep fighting, no matter what bruises you get. Keep running, no matter how many times you stumble and fall. Your cuts and bruises and scrapes and scars are medals of honor in God’s sight, signs that you had the faith, courage, determination, and commitment to keep going even when it was tough! You may have fallen, but you refused to quit.

At the end of the race, you’ll be able to say, “My only aim is to finish the race and complete the task that I was given.” ■

# Dealing with Dragons

By Marie Story, adapted



**T**he *Hobbit*, a fantasy novel by J. R. R. Tolkien, is the story of Bilbo Baggins, a comfort-loving hobbit who is thrust into an unwanted quest for dragon treasure with a wizard and a group of dwarves. On the way, he faces all manner of hardships, from goblins to hostile elves to giant spiders.

Finally, the adventurers reach their destination: the mountain lair of the dragon Smaug. Bilbo enters through a secret door in the mountainside to face the dragon alone, while the dwarves wait outside. As he makes his way through the dark tunnel, he hears what sounds like a kettle bubbling on the stove. That noise grows into what seems like a giant cat purring. Suddenly Bilbo realizes that he's hearing the sound of the dragon snoring deep in the cave.

Bilbo is petrified. He wants nothing more than to turn back, and he nearly does, but instead he decides to press on. Tolkien writes, "Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterward were as nothing compared to it. He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait."

We all face challenges where we want to run away before we've even had a chance to see what's ahead. Dealing with dragons (or other scary obstacles) takes a whole lot of courage, and not always in the way we'd imagine. Bilbo's

testing point came in the tunnel. He had to face his fear and self-doubt even before he had to face the dragon.

These "dragons" in our lives don't always seem like a big deal to anyone but us, and as a result, we often have to find the key to victory within ourselves. C. S. Lewis wrote, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at its testing point." Sometimes we have to simply not give ourselves room to wiggle out of doing what's right.

If you're anything like me, then you're probably feeling that having this kind of courage is nearly impossible. As strong as we are, or try to be, we often lack the mettle that we'd need to overcome. So where can we find the courage to face life's challenges?

If you don't have a ton of courage right now, that's okay. Bilbo had been building up his courage little by little throughout his journey. He fought fearsome enemies and won. He tackled difficult problems and found solutions. Each time he faced a challenge bravely, it was an investment in courage; and those investments paid off when it came time to face the dragon.

The King's Guard of ancient Greece had a motto: "All men have fears, but the brave put down their fears and go forward, sometimes to death, but always to victory." We all have dragons in our lives, so face your dragons boldly. ■

# The Rise of the Problem-Solver

By Sunil Kumar

Some friends and I were helping to prepare a beauty salon for opening, and my part involved setting up the in-house entertainment system. The salon's setup included individual TV sets for each of the stations, complete with sound, etc. I was excited to work on this project, but soon realized there were some aspects to it that were outside my realm of expertise.

For a while, I tried unsuccessfully to solve the rather complex problem of wiring the individual sets to the main set, making the individualized sound work, etc. I hashed and rehashed the problem in my mind, eventually throwing my hands up in frustration and admitting that I needed help.

I made an appointment to meet up with someone who specializes in this kind of engineering to see if I could get some advice. The result was that

I not only got help with my project, but I learned something valuable at the same time.

This young man was vibrant and full of life. He relished the challenge and refused to take no for an answer.

Every time I voiced something I thought was an obstacle, he found a solution. Sometimes that meant going back and changing something we had originally thought would work, but eventually, we found solutions to each problem. It wasn't long before the updated blueprints we'd worked on were before me, making perfect sense.

I was able to implement all the solutions we'd come up with, and the salon now has working individual entertainment centers.

It got me wondering how I too could make life easier for others in the areas I'm proficient in. If everyone made the effort to discover, analyze, and solve issues, how much easier and more positive our journey through life would be. ■



# My Aconcagua

By Rosane Pereira

When I was a child, my father joined a mountain-climbing club where people from all around Rio would meet on Sundays to climb together. Once he had learned the main tracks, he began taking his kids and other teens from the neighborhood up to the many peaks in the area. As I grew up, I realized that life is like a range of mountains, and each one needs to be conquered in a different way.

My youngest son, Mat, suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). He is hyperactive and has difficulty concentrating. He struggles to learn appropriate behavior and to understand rules. On the other hand, he is very caring and gets along unusually well with animals and small children.

I always thought that if I had a child with disabilities or learning difficulties, I would feel discouraged or upset at God, but my first feeling at receiving the diagnosis was deep love and compassion. I held Mat tight and thought, *this is our next mountain and we will climb it together*. I was also blessed to have lots of support from friends who helped me research the condition.

Over the years, I have had moments of doubt and questioning “why us?” but

all along, God found ways to reassure me of His special love for Mat. He’s often found himself on the receiving end of special treats, like when we were traveling to visit my older daughter and her family in Chile, and Mat made friends with the cabin crew and pilots. As boarding was delayed, he got to talk with them for a long time in his broken Spanish and was thrilled when the pilot later mentioned him by name in his announcements and invited him to visit the cockpit.

Early in the morning, the plane passed by Mount Aconcagua (6,961 meters; 22,837 ft.), the highest mountain in the Western and Southern Andes mountain range in the Mendoza province of Argentina. That was the first time I had seen a mountain so high that even planes had to circle it. It is a majestic peak, with hundreds of smaller mountains around it. They were all covered with snow that shone with the first golden rays of the sun.

Life can be as beautiful as the Andes at dawn, even though it is full of tall mountains. My son Mat has been my Aconcagua so far. Even though it hasn’t been easy, I have been thrilled with every moment of our climb! ■



# Onwards to Excellence

By Maria Doehler

**M**y friend's daughter, Jenni, is 12 years old and enrolled in a high-commitment gymnastics program. Four times a week, she practices after school for four hours. She does her homework in the car on the way there and eats dinner in the car on the way home.

This has always been Jenni's choice. She loves gymnastics and wants to take it as far as she can. She'd already won medals and was considered the best gymnast at her level in the area when she enrolled in this intense training program with the goal of earning a gymnastics scholarship for college.

A few months into the program, she's admitting that it's tough. Sometimes she gets frustrated at the combined load of keeping good grades in school as well as progressing in gymnastics, or the lack of time to hang out with her friends. Her coaches have high expectations and they expect her not to complain but to persevere.

So why does she do it? She's following a dream. She's taking her talent and developing it into a skill.

A lot of us haven't got it in us to push ourselves toward excellence. The thought of the commitment, discipline, and hard work it would take is enough to dissuade us. Yet we all have the opportunity to develop excellence in our lives, to be the very best we can be, to do the outstanding. Sadly, the ingredient most often missing is the commitment to see it through.

I admire Jenni for what she's doing with her talent. I know that what she's learning through the discipline, sacrifice, and commitment involved will be of great value to her for the rest of her life.

If you have a talent or skill, invest in it. You may not know now the end result of your investment, but one thing is certain, you will have the satisfaction that you've done your best. ■

# How to Win at Life



Excerpts from a WikiHow article

**L**ife isn't a game that you can win or lose, but that doesn't mean that there aren't ways to make your life more fulfilling and make you more content. The great thing is that you can make changes in your life and attitude that will benefit you in the long run. Winning at life really just means learning how to be content and fulfilled, and fortunately there are ways to do that!

## 1. Having Fulfilling Interpersonal Relationships

- **Be intentional about the people you allow in your life.** They can either boost you up during the difficult times, or they can create a drag on your mental and physical wellbeing. Surround yourself with people who make you the best version of yourself.

- **Be mindful of the 30/30/30 rule.** There's this idea out there that, no matter what you do, 1/3 of the people you meet

in life will love you unconditionally; 1/3 of the people you meet will hate you unapologetically; and 1/3 of the people you meet simply won't care about you one way or the other. Focus on strengthening relationships you have with the 1/3 of people who actually like you for who you are.

- **Ask for help.** It can be really hard to let people know that you're having a difficult time and that you might need a hand with things. If you're having a hard time, ask your trusted friends for help. Make sure that you are available to help others, too. The more you cultivate a culture of mutual support, the more help your friends are likely to offer you.

- **Share what you can.** Sharing and giving back to your community—whether it's time, money, or resources—will help you live a more fulfilled life. Why? Because in giving back, you're more likely to experience joy, optimism,

and a feeling of fulfillment in your life.

- **Don't compare yourself to others.**

There are always going to be people who are better at things than you, or are more attractive than you, or are smarter than you, or who have more relationships than you. By comparing yourself and your life to theirs you're going to bring yourself down.

## 2. Having Fulfilling Personal Growth

- **Be confident.** Having confidence shows that you are secure in yourself. Fortunately, confidence, like many things, is a skill that can be learned. Even if you don't start off feeling confident, the more you practice, the better you'll get and the happier you'll feel.

- **Keep learning.** You never want to stop educating yourself throughout your life. It will keep your brain sharp, lower your risk for diseases like Alzheimer's, and will make sure that you have interesting things to discuss with other people.

- **Learn from your bad times.** No matter how successful you are, no matter how healthy you are, no matter what you do or don't do, you're going to have difficult times. It's how you respond to them that will determine your ability to be successful at life.

- **Face your problems.** Part of winning at life and being content and fulfilled is facing the more difficult challenges that life throws at you. Giving up or ignoring problems will hurt you in the long run and make you feel worse about yourself and about your life.

- **Find a fulfilling vocation.** The best thing you can do is find a job that you love, even if it's one that shows up in an unusual way. Sometimes this

isn't possible, but it is still possible to find fulfillment in a job you wouldn't necessarily enjoy.

## 3. Maintaining Your Mental and Physical Health

- **Cultivate gratitude.** This is one of the single most important things you can do to win at life and lead a life where you feel content and fulfilled. Even if things are not going well, remember that things have gone well, some things are going well, and that things can go well in the future.

- **Own yourself and your actions.** The thing to remember about life is that it is a series of choices. You have a choice about how you act and how you react and you need to take responsibility for those choices, rather than acting as if everything just happens to you.

- **Eat foods that are good for you.** Practicing good eating habits can help your mood, and make you feel better about yourself and your life. Find a sense of balance between healthy eating and fun eating (like sugary, processed things) and you'll see an improvement in your health and your life.

- **Practice healthy habits.** There are lots of things you can do in your life to be healthy, which will make you more fulfilled and content. Health problems can consume a lot time and worry and are typically made worse by unhealthy habits.

- **Take care of yourself.** Your happiness and your success in life depend in a great part on your personal well-being. You need to take care of yourself so that you feel good about your life and about yourself. ■



# New Roads

By Joyce Suttin

It sure was a long time coming! For months, we had suffered from detours and delays. Traffic was often backed up so badly along the construction site that I began avoiding the area altogether when possible. Sometimes the congestion was so bad that I wished they had never attempted to “improve” the roads in the area. Then after having endured lane closures, work zones, and long, long delays for what felt like forever, I found myself this morning coasting along on a beautiful new stretch of smooth tarmac. I was so excited.

Isn't life like that? We get used to our regular routes and ruts. Even though they're a little problematic, they're also comfortably familiar. We swerve around the potholes and think nothing of it. Then we get annoyed with somebody who isn't familiar with our well-worn route and doesn't know how to navigate it. Finally, we see the big machines and yellow cones and realize it's time for a change, and that improvement—perhaps long overdue—is about to happen.

Just like the Department of Transportation's road improvements, change in our lives doesn't just happen

overnight. Whether it's time for a widening, a little resurfacing, or an entirely new stretch, it takes a lot of courage to follow the road to someplace new.

Often, the preparation seems like it will last forever. Then the day finally comes and you're really on your way. A few twists and turns and you just seem to sail along to the place you're meant to be. Gone are the ruts, the bumps and holes, the delays! It may take a little time to get used to the new road, but it is so worthwhile.

As we approach the start of any new project—or even if we're not there yet, but we're still at the stage of considering our options—it is good to think about new roads. Is it time to do something new? Do those delays that test our patience so much mean something really smooth is just about ready to roll out?

Let's face the future with excitement and anticipation. Rather than lament the old roads, or bemoan the hassle the changes are bringing, let's fix our focus on what's ahead. Life has ups and downs, stops and starts, but eventually we'll find ourselves once again happily sailing along on the open road of life. ■

# A Work in Progress

By Janet Kluck

We all have them—plans that didn't turn out the way we'd hoped, prayers that seem like they didn't make it past the ceiling, dreams that break and are shattered as we wonder what went wrong. We keep going, but often these apparent failures remain etched in our mind along with a question mark. Why didn't things turn out the way I had planned or hoped or prayed?

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 the marvelous masterpiece that it truly can be.

Maybe those dark spots in our lives represent a broken friendship, a painful breakup, a new opportunity falling through, or a feeling that our goals and dreams are slowly being swept away by life just being the way it is—complicated, busy, and not always in our favor. All of that can change, though!

I read recently that we cannot disappoint God, because He already knows that we can't be perfect. He is fully aware of our failures, setbacks—and even mistakes—and He still loves us with more intensity, care, and compassion than we can begin to comprehend. If we try to figure it all out or fully understand His plan, forcing things to fit into our very limited perspective, we'll only be disappointed in ourselves when things don't turn out the way we've dreamed and hoped.

God has His own plan for our lives—one filled with splashes of light and blends of color, depth, and texture—and He's waiting by the canvas with a brush, ready to paint it into reality. All we have to do is give Him room to work and make something beautiful. ■

# How to Win

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



Victory is always possible for the person who refuses to stop fighting.—Napoleon Hill

The “how” thinker gets problems solved effectively because he wastes no time with futile “ifs” but goes right to work on the creative “how.”—Norman Vincent Peale

Everyone who achieves success in a great venture solves each problem as they come to it. ... They keep going regardless of the obstacles they meet.—W. Clement Stone

Winning is only half of it. Having fun is the other half.—Bum Phillips

Courage is the common currency of all those who choose to do the right thing.—Florence Nightingale

Winning is great, sure, but if you are really going to do something in life, the secret is learning how to lose. Nobody goes undefeated all the time. If you can pick up after a crushing defeat, and go on to win again, you are going to be a champion someday.—Wilma Rudolph

Show class, have pride, and display character. If you do, winning takes care of itself.—Paul Bryant

Winning takes talent, to repeat takes character.—John Wooden

You learn more from losing than winning. You learn how to keep going.—Morgan Wootten

You're not obligated to win. You're obligated to keep trying. Do the best you can do every day.—Jason Mraz

