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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

How NOT to Lose Hope in Difficult Times

Parenting from the Heart

Coping with disappointment

The Quest for Closure



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“Life is difficult” wrote one best-selling author. And he was right. Life often tests our hope and faith with its challenges and difficulties. But the stories you’re about to read are the perfect antidote. They dramatically show how people just like you not only overcame illness and hardships, but deepened their faith in the process.

You’ll meet a bus driver who became a beacon of light to his passengers on a cold, dreary day, a wife who found joy again after losing her husband, and a daughter who learned to forgive after heart-breaking disappointment.

Their stories are sure to move and inspire you.

You will also find tips and quotes on how to cope with disappointment, and how to not lose hope when going through difficulties, something we all need at different times in our lives when circumstances are especially challenging.

With changes and challenging circumstances right around the corner, working on this issue of *Motivated* encouraged me at a time when I needed it most. It boosted my personal hopefulness for the future, and I hope it will do the same for you.

Christina Lane
For Motivated



The Story of Lauren Scruggs

Web Reprint

When going through tough times, knowing that others have also gone through difficult experiences, and found happiness afterwards, can give us hope that life can improve. “If they can be happy, I can be happy too.” Below is the true story of Lauren Scruggs, an extraordinary survivor of hard times. She put her troubles behind her and created a bright future for herself. She emerged triumphant over immense pain, loss, and suffering. Her amazing resilience, inner strength, and positive spirit make her a role model for all of us.

In December 2011, Lauren Scruggs, the 23-year-old US fashion blogger and model, accidentally walked into a rotating plane propeller. As a result, she suffered severe injuries, including brain damage, and the loss of her left eye and hand. Lauren had shoulder and collarbone reconstruction, and a prosthetic hand and eye fitted.

Lauren is still recovering from the accident, and is having regular rehabilitation. Amazingly, her spirits have not been dampened; in fact, she

said in an interview to news.com.au, “In majority, the accident has increased my passions and has brought more depth to them... I’ve gained a new perspective.”

“Spiritually, I’ve just learned to live by faith and not by sight,” Lauren said. “Even though I’ve lost my left eye, I’ve just realized that God has a strong purpose in it, and I need to use that... I realize God’s in control of my life and there’s a purpose to this story.”

Lauren has written a book about her ordeal called, *Still Lola*. She recently joined *E!News* as a reporter, and continues to work on *Lolo Magazine*—a magazine and blog she started in 2011. (<http://lolomag.com/>)

Lauren said, “I have kind of gained a new perspective of life and I feel like I need to use my message of hope and healing to help others, (and) inspire others, just like people have inspired me.” ■

Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. – Helen Keller

How NOT to Lose Hope in Difficult Times



By Donald Latumahina, adapted

Like it or not, there will be difficult times in our lives. We might lose our job, fail in our business, have an accident or illness, or lose a loved one. Whatever the case may be, it's essential that we don't lose hope.

We must have hope that we will get through it. If we don't, we will only drag ourselves down. We will enter a vicious cycle where our negative attitude makes the situation worse, which makes us even more negative, and so on.

We should try our best to not let that happen, and be prepared for difficult times so that we are ready when they come.

Here are some ideas for how not to lose hope in difficult times:

1. Have faith.

Based on my experiences, to not lose hope we must have faith. We must believe that things will work out well in the end.

In my case, I believe that God is in control of my life and has a good plan for me. No matter how bad the situation looks, I've learned to trust, even if I don't understand how things will work. Time and again, things turn out to be good, often in a way that I couldn't understand earlier.

Just to give you one example, several years back I failed my Master's degree at a local university for reasons that were beyond my control. It was a really bad experience, especially given how hard I had been working on it. Long story short, I eventually got a scholarship at an overseas university that was of much better quality than my previous university. I learned a lot more there than I could ever otherwise.

Experiences like this strengthen my belief that having faith is essential in difficult times. In fact, I believe it to be the most important tip here, which is why I list it first.

2. Remember the "why."

When we are in a difficult time, we should remember: why do I do what I am doing in the first place? What is it that I am after? Remembering the why gives us the strength to keep going because the cause will pull us ahead. As Viktor Frankl once said: "Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how.'"

There are two points here:

- We should always have a cause in whatever we do. To put it simply, if we don't have a why, then we should not do it.
- We should always remember what the cause is, and keep it front in our mind

so that we don't lose sight of it.

To be effective, the cause should be bigger than ourselves. A self-centered "cause" won't work. It must be something that gives us inner satisfaction rather than external rewards. It must be inspiring.

3. Surround yourself with supportive people.

Going through difficult times is hard, but going through them alone is even harder. We need a group of positive people who can support us. We should try to become part of a community that cares and encourages one another. If we don't, we can start looking for one. We should not wait until we need it, because by then it may be too late. We need community before difficult times come.

4. Help others.

An additional benefit of being in a good community is that it encourages us to think about other people. It pushes us to help others and, therefore, think about other people. This way we shift our focus away from ourselves. As a result, our situation won't look as bad as it might otherwise.

Often the situation looks worse than it really is because we give it too much attention. Shifting some of our attention away will put the situation in a better perspective.

When we are in a difficult time, let's remember: don't lose hope. Hope is essential; once we lose it, we already lost the game. Furthermore, it's our responsibility to not lose hope. We can make it as long as we don't break it. ■

THE KIND GESTURE

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

By Elizabeth Gilbert

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

But as the bus approached Seventh Avenue, the driver got on the intercom. “Folks,” he said, “I know you’ve had a rough day and you’re frustrated. I can’t do anything about the weather or traffic, but here’s what I can do. As each one of you gets off the bus, I will reach out my hand to you. As you walk by, drop your troubles into the palm of my hand, okay? Don’t take your problems home to your families tonight—just leave ‘em with me.

My route goes right by the Hudson River, and when I drive by there later, I’ll open the window and throw your troubles in the water. Sound good?”

It was as if a spell had lifted. Everyone burst out laughing. Faces gleamed with surprised delight. People who’d been pretending for the past hour not to notice each other’s existence were suddenly grinning at each other like, is this guy serious?

Oh, he was serious.

At the next stop—just as promised—the driver reached out his hand, palm up, and waited. One by one, all the exiting commuters placed their hand just above his and mimed the gesture of dropping something into his palm. Some people laughed as they did this, some teared up—but everyone did it. The driver repeated the same lovely ritual at the next stop, too. And the next. All the way to the river.



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

But what if you are the light? What if you're the very agent of illumination that a dark situation begs for?

That's what this bus driver taught me—that anyone can be the light, at any moment. This guy wasn't some big power player. He wasn't a spiritual leader. He wasn't some media-savvy "influencer." He was a bus driver—one of society's most invisible workers. But he possessed real power, and he used it beautifully for our benefit.

When life feels especially grim, or when I feel particularly powerless in the face of the world's troubles, I think of this man and ask myself, *What can I do, right now, to be the light?* Of course, I can't personally end all wars, or solve global warming, or transform vexing people into entirely different creatures. I definitely can't control traffic. But I do have some influence on everyone I brush up against, even if we never speak or learn each other's name. How we behave matters, because within human society everything is contagious—sadness and anger, yes, but also patience and generosity. Which means we all have more influence than we realize.

No matter who you are, or where you are, or how mundane or tough your situation may seem, I believe you can illuminate your world. In fact, I believe this is the only way the world will ever be illuminated—one bright act of grace at a time, all the way to the river. ■

COPING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



When someone you look up to lets you down

By F. Diane Barth L.C.S.W., adapted

Roberta* was devastated when she learned that her father, who she adored, had made a grave mistake. “How could he?” she demanded over and over again. “It goes against all of the values he taught us.”

At first she cried every time she thought about what she saw as his betrayal. Then she began to get angry. “He’s a liar, a fraud,” she said bitterly. “He’s not the man he made himself out to be.”

Disappointment is part of life. According to Heinz Kohut, it is also necessary for human development. If we aren’t disappointed, we often don’t have motivation to grow.

But to promote growth, disappointment needs to be experienced, at least at first, in small, manageable doses. In other words, tolerable disappointments experienced when we are young, while our parents are there to help us cope with them, build psychological “muscles” and skills for coping with these feelings.

This doesn’t mean that parents should look for ways to disappoint their children. But it does mean that rather than trying to protect them from all unhappiness, we should consider the normal, small and tolerable frustrations and dissatisfactions that go into a young life—for example not being able to find a favorite toy, not being able to buy candy at the grocery store, having to stay with a babysitter for a few hours, and even having to share with a sibling—to be part of the process of building coping skills.

But what happens when the pain feels like too much for a youngster to tolerate? Martin Luther King, Jr. observed that the more we love someone (or something), the more deeply we feel disappointed in them. When the person who causes the distress can recognize the impact the situation and their behavior have had on others, and can genuinely acknowledge empathy for them, the pain often gets better. When the person can also take responsibility for his or her actions, and

can offer—or even try to offer—some sort of explanation for their behavior, that can help as well.

This process can be complicated, but several steps can help when someone has disappointed you.

Talk about it. Bringing the pain to the surface may seem to make things worse at first, but keeping it buried deep inside often causes it to fester. Talking to friends, relatives, or a professional can help you process the feelings.

Remember that there is always more than one side to a story. Try to get more information before taking any action or making any decisions about responding to a situation.

Put yourself in the other person's place. Even if you believe it, try not to say, “I would never do that.” You might, if you were in the exact same position.

Be kind to yourself. Anger, which may be your primary feeling, is often a reaction to hurt. Try to acknowledge how badly hurt you feel; and try to soothe your pain gently and kindly.

Talking to the person who has disappointed you, if possible, can be helpful; but sometimes it can make things worse. So be clear about what you hope to accomplish in the discussion. Attacking them will probably not help. A mutually revealing conversation might.

The first time Roberta tried to speak to her father, all she could do was yell at him. She demanded that he tell her that he was a bad man, and that he explain himself to her. “How could you have done it?” she shouted over and over. His eyes filled with tears, but he just stood and listened to her. When he did not defend himself or agree that he was a bad person, as she was demanding that he do,

she left the house and refused to speak to him for months.

One day he left a message on her home answering machine when he knew she would be at work. “I just want to tell you that I’m sorry,” he said. “I am so sorry that I hurt you. I cannot explain what I did, but I want you to know that I love you and will always love you. I hope that you will eventually be able to love me again.”

Roberta’s husband heard the message before she did, and told her about it. Her first impulse was to erase it, but he stopped her. “What he did was wrong,” he said, “but we don’t know what all was going on for him. We do know that he still loves you, and he probably needs you right now. You don’t need to condone his behavior—in fact, you shouldn’t. And you don’t even need to forgive him. But can you let him know that you still love him, even though he has disappointed you so deeply?”

Roberta thought long and hard about it, and finally agreed to speak with her father. She told him that she would not be able to trust him completely for a very long time; but that she still loved him. And although she continued to feel angry and disappointed in his behavior, she no longer felt devastated by it.

One of the keys to coping with disappointment in others, I think, is this: we are all human, and humans are by definition imperfect beings. We all, every one of us, disappoint someone at some time or another. Recognizing this fact can help us deal with the pain of disillusionment when it comes, as it inevitably must, and to deepen our capacity to love and connect with our flawed fellow creatures. ■

WHEN LUPINES BLOOM, I THINK OF HIM

By Elaine Mansfield, adapted

My husband Vic and I planted many pounds of wildflower seeds in our fields over the years. Wild grasses devoured some of them, but the lupines thrived and self-seeded on broad hillsides. On the day of Vic's death in June 2008, lupines bloomed with wild abandon, erupting from the earth with thousands of tall purple spikes.

In 2009, after my first long year of grieving, the lupines sent up flower stalks again. They pushed their way through my numb despair. Life goes on, they insisted. Open your eyes. There is joy here.

Wanting to share the beauty, I invited my community for a walk to mark this sad anniversary. My sons planned to be home, so they could be part of the day. Friends organized a pot-luck feast. I hoped for a day of remembrance, but even more a day of thanks for my friends, my sons, and the land that held and soothed my grief.

Throughout an afternoon of sunshine and soft breezes, people arrived to celebrate Vic's life and admire the flowers. Some walked alone in walking meditation, some laughed in small groups, and some moved silently, holding hands. They strolled along trails bordered by lupines and daisies and headed for the oak knoll.

As people began their walk near the house, they passed others returning for refreshments and food. I walked toward the woods with one group for a while and then turned to walk back toward the house with another. I spent the afternoon strolling back and forth through the fields, greedily devouring hugs and love, admiring my smiling friends in their pastel summer clothes, and adoring the purple lupines.

My sons had dreaded this first anniversary day, imagining a somber affair with a weeping mother and an avalanche of sympathetic, solicitous looks. Instead, we temporarily put our tears aside and celebrated that we were together and that Vic was once here, too.

"It's wonderful to see you smile," my oldest son said as he pulled me close.

A few days later, I grabbed a rake and bags of lupine and northeast wildflower seeds and walked to a cleared area near the entry to the woods. My sons had prepared this new planting site before they left. I planted seeds of hope for new life and watered them with tears.

Years later, I still walk the trails and watch for lupines each spring. I walk through blooming fields, remember my husband, and give thanks for life and continuing love. ■

THE QUEST FOR CLOSURE

By Julie Lange, adapted

I often hear people speak about finding closure after a major life trauma or loss.

When a loved one dies, a relationship ends, or our life changes because of major health issues, we say we are seeking closure. We long for relief from the voices in our heads telling us that we should have done more or loved better. We may hope for absolution for our own actions, or crave vindication for the lousy way we've been treated. We tell ourselves that when we find closure we will finally be done grieving and able to move on.

The popular wisdom says that grief typically happens in five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. This is a rather neat and orderly description of a process that is innately messy and disorderly. The stages tend to overlap, get stuck on replay and sometimes even spill over into other conditions like depression, addiction or obsession.

But is closure really the prize that's waiting for us at the end of the grieving process? After we've struggled through all those stages, and cried all those tears, is it reasonable to expect to feel some sense of closure? Or is closure an illusion that will forever elude our grasp?

I've come to the conclusion that the purpose of grieving is not closure at all. Rather, what our grief requires of us is our loving attention. It asks us to acknowledge and tend to our sacred wound with patience and compassion for ourselves. It does not want our despair. Nor does it want to be hidden away behind a façade of acceptance. It does not ask us to give up on our hopes for happiness, nor does it want us to pretend that the pain has gone away.

The notion of closure implies that we can stop grieving, pick up the pieces of our shattered selves and go on with our lives. But the simple fact is that we can never go back to our lives. That old life is over. A major loss changes us forever.

Grief asks that we be with it and allow it the space it needs to express itself. Over time, the expression of our grief becomes less frequent, less intense, and we slowly heal.

There is no closure, but hopefully we come to accept that we have been changed by our loss, and that grief has become a part of us. And that in this changed person, there is still plenty of room to grow and love, and find joy again. ■

Never lose hope

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

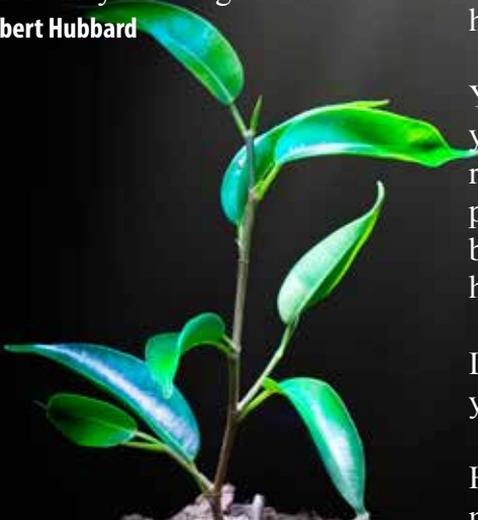
—**Desmond Tutu**

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

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

—**Samuel Smiles**

A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success.—**Elbert Hubbard**



Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.

—**Jonas Salk**

God grant me the courage not to give up what I think is right even though I think it is hopeless.—**Chester W. Nimitz**

Hope is the only bee that makes honey without flowers.

—**Robert Green Ingersoll**

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.—**Joseph Addison**

You can make positive deposits in your own economy every day by reading and listening to powerful, positive, life-changing content and by associating with encouraging and hope-building people.—**Zig Ziglar**

Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future.—**Robert H. Schuller**

Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.—**Thich Nhat Hanh**