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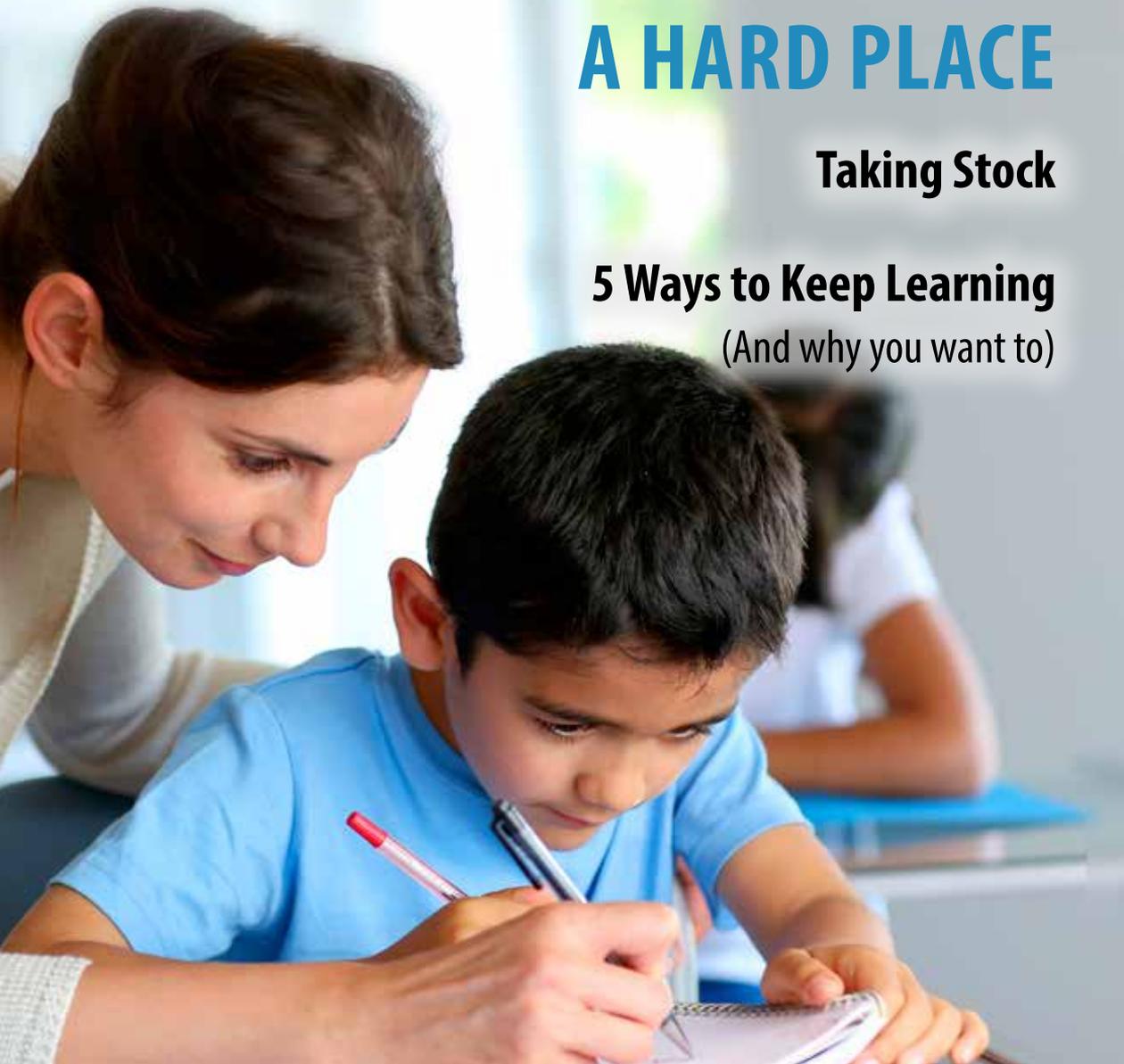
MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Taking Stock

5 Ways to Keep Learning
(And why you want to)



3 Don't Roll Over, Beethoven

4 Between a Rock and a Hard Place

6 Taking Stock

7 The First Day

8 5 Ways to Keep Learning
(And why you want to)

10 Perseverance Pays Off

11 You, Me, and Change

12 Notable Quotes
Learning and growing

Issue Editor

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Christina Lane

Design

awexdesign

Contact Us:
Email
Website

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com
www.motivatedmagazine.com

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Children are natural learners. As long as their basic needs are met, their thirst for new information and experiences is boundless. If they're happy, have interesting things to do, and safe places in which to do them, they will explore and develop to their full potential.

Neuroscience research tells us that 90% of a child's brain development occurs at a lightning-fast pace between birth and the age of five. Children soak up information and skills from what they see and hear others do and through their own trial and error. Every sight, smell, sound, and sensation makes an impact. Long before their first step into a classroom, their neurons are building networks, their cognition is exploding, their language skills are developing, and they're laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

But for many of us grownups that torrent of learning turns into a gentle stream, and eventually a trickle. Life happens. Stress and responsibilities cloud our minds, and our own growth and learning take a back step to things that seem more important—or in any case, more urgent.

"Learn as if you were to live forever." Even though our time on earth is limited, we're not meant to stop growing and learning. Part of finding and sustaining happiness is remaining open to new things as time passes, though it's not always easy to do this.

Some of the greatest moments in life revolve around learning something, no matter how small it may be. I hope you will enjoy the articles in this issue of *Motivated*, and that they will provide some light-bulb moments to improve your life, renew your vision, and strengthen your faith.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Don't Roll Over, Beethoven

By Anna Perlini, adapted



When my father had me listen to Beethoven's 6th Symphony for the first of many times, he was undoubtedly trying to impart to me his passion for classical music. Yet, there was more he wanted to teach me.

I was only a small child at the time, yet I remember it vividly. The music started off gently depicting a peaceful pastoral scene, as I happily played at my father's feet. Then a little cloud came, and I started feeling a bit apprehensive and huddled closer to him. Along came a rumble of thunder, then lightning, and it kept building up until the storm got so powerful, so huge, so scary, that I ran to my father's arms. He whispered comforting words, "Don't worry, my child. The storm will pass. See? It's already going away. The music is changing."

Every so often we would listen to it again—eventually, I was the one asking for it. We would smile and laugh together when the tranquil tune came back after the climax—the peace and calm after the storm.

Many years passed, that little girl grew up, and Beethoven's 6th Symphony was forgotten, replaced by many other soundtracks.

But eventually, the real storms of life arrived. During one particularly troubling time, someone gave me a CD of that symphony, and it happened all over again. I was moved to tears, realizing that my father had known all along what life would hold for me: peaceful days, heavy storms, and then peace again. It was as though he had wanted to prepare me in advance.

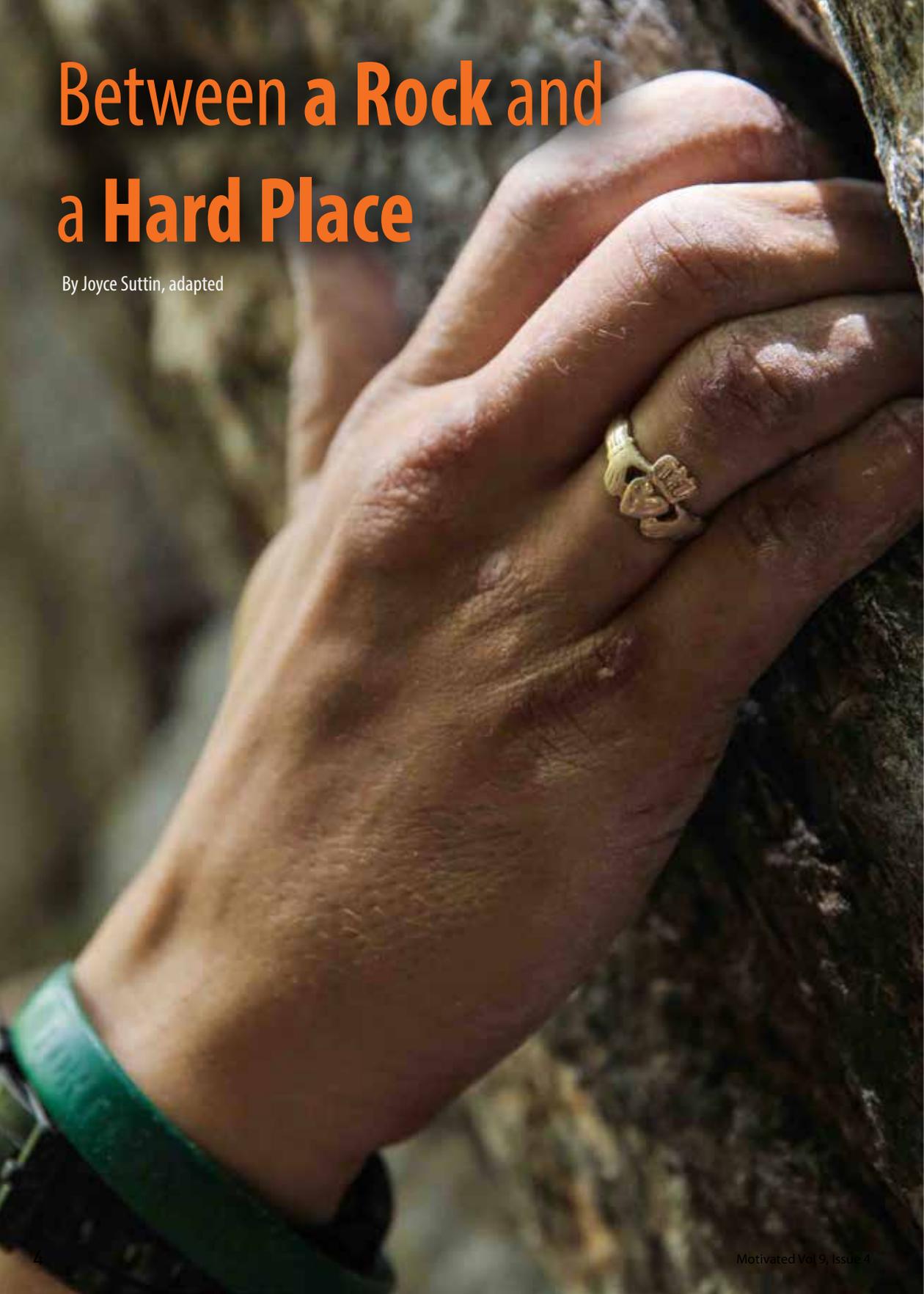
Eventually most storms cease, and all is calm again—and often even more beautiful and sparkling clear than before.

To this day, whenever I listen to that particular piece of music, I shed a few tears. I can't help it, really; it's my life's theme song. ■

You can listen to Beethoven's 6th Symphony online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHmWoAj4aI0>.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

By Joyce Suttin, adapted



I'd been going through a few tough weeks, when I began questioning how much faith I had to face difficulties. I'd also been concerned about growing older, berating myself for becoming such a wimp, not able to keep up as I used to. So I gratefully accepted an invitation from my daughter Madi to go hiking in a place called *Enchanted Rock*.

Despite an early wakeup, we didn't quite accomplish our goal of making it there before sunrise. However, the morning was misty, the temperature was still pleasant, and we felt refreshed as we began our climb over the stony hills. We snapped some fun photos. One showed my daughter sitting in what looked like a huge hollow of a hand made out of stone.

When we reached the summit of the second hill, Madi said she was curious to see what was on the other side, off the beaten path. It was exciting, even exhilarating, as we found our way, cutting through rock formations and even squeezing through some narrow passages, looking for a way down to the valley that looked deceptively close.

What happened, happened suddenly! Madi reached a steep incline next to a rock wall. As she stepped onto it, she sped downhill about ten feet on wet granite that was as slippery as ice. I heard the impact as she hit a rock wall at the base. Thankfully, she was able to hold out her arms and cushion the impact on the top half of her body, but her knee slammed into the wall, and although she kept saying "I'm OK! I'm OK!" I knew she wasn't.

From where I stood at the top of the incline, I could see her knee swelling and turning blue, and I knew I had to go

down and check on her. I thought I could get down there carefully, but as soon as I stepped on the slippery slide, my legs gave way and I fell on my hip, banging my head in the process. Both of us ended up at the bottom of the incline with no way up or down.

We checked each other's injuries and then realized the only way out of our predicament was to the side, over some boulders.

Then there I was, standing in front of a shoulder-high boulder, knowing I had to find a way to climb it. I found a crack to get a grip, and with my daughter boosting me as much as she could, I was able to hoist myself up, then reach back and help pull her up. Back and forth we went, I helping her, she helping me, until we wound our way over boulders, through caves and narrow places back to the summit. By then, we'd almost forgotten about the aches and celebrated the fact that we were all right and that it hadn't been much worse.

My perceptions about my faith have changed since this incident. I've also realized how much stronger I am than I thought. A wimp wouldn't have attempted to climb those boulders! The strength I felt that day was almost supernatural. In my concern for my daughter and getting her to safety, I knew I could do anything. Once I realized that the only way out was up, I knew I couldn't let fear get the better of me. I had to face my weakness and turn it into strength.

I learned that I don't have to worry about my weakness, and that my faith and God's strength is there for me whenever I need help to face the rocks and hard places I find myself in. ■

Taking Stock



By Chris Mizrany, adapted

I don't imagine that the word "spreadsheet" invokes excitement or joy in any but the most hardcore of office warriors. I know it sure doesn't for me.

Nevertheless, this week I needed to overhaul one of our spreadsheets, adding functionality, such as a constant automatic tally of items gone out in a month, remaining stock, breakdown of item stock into various categories, etc. Oh joy!

I ended up battling it out for almost an hour with the main formula. First, not all the cells could be included for some reason, then the A and B columns had some kind of disagreement resulting in the category separation being messed up, and on it went!

I did eventually get it right and am now the proud creator of a more complete and useful spreadsheet. You know what I learned through that grueling process, though? It's only right if it's all right. It did me no good to have the formula mostly right, or even rewrite it in clever ways—I did try! It only worked when

every part of it was in order and correct. Then it worked beautifully!

It's like our life! All parts—spiritual, physical, emotional—need to work together to have us live life to the fullest. Otherwise, we'll soon see that things aren't adding up correctly. The only way for us to be whole and purpose-filled is to give each of these areas of our lives the needed attention

And you know what I discovered—too late—that makes things even easier? There's a list of preset functions and formulas (math, data, financial, etc.) that I could apply. Even if you don't know much about spreadsheets at all, there are preset formulas for life—such as loving God and others—that can help us get things right.

Also worth noting is that the more we study and practice, the better prepared we are. We gain knowledge and experience that we can use later on. I'll never again struggle with a spreadsheet like I struggled that day. I've learned something. I'm moving forward. ■

The First Day



By Elsa Sichrovsky, adapted

“However much you’ve prepared beforehand,” my friend warned, “the first day at university will still be an overwhelming experience.” I wasn’t sure why she thought something as innocuous as a university could be overwhelming, but I told her that since I’d done all right in high school, I was sure I’d manage university just fine.

I stepped out of the metro station, campus map in hand, and purposefully struck out in what I hoped was the right direction toward my first class. I’ve never quite figured out how to use a map and never paid much attention to road signs. I ended up roaming helplessly for two hours across the university that boasts eleven campuses. Finally, I stumbled into my class about fifteen minutes before it ended. As I sank wearily into my seat, I recalled my friend’s words.

After asking some of my fellow students for directions, I successfully located my next class, an introductory course on linguistics. A woman was sitting on a bench outside, dressed in a sports shirt and baggy jeans. I assumed she was the janitor and entered the classroom where a woman wearing a blouse, black skirt, and high heels was writing on the blackboard. The professor, I assumed. She went on

to lead the class in a short oral test and survey. Then the woman in jeans swung open the door and introduced herself as Professor (and eminent linguist) Lee. She then introduced her assistant—the woman in a skirt!

There were more surprises in store at the next class, an introduction to Western Literature. I listened for dates, facts, and figures, all of which I studiously jotted down. But it turned out none of that was of any use. Instead, after the first hour, I found myself in a group of ten absolute strangers tasked with producing a play complete with music, costumes, a stage, and so on—all within two weeks!

Of course, by the end of the semester I knew where to find the best study nooks on campus, my group’s play came out fine, and I learned that professors will dress however they like. As I look back ruefully at my freshman blues, I know they certainly weren’t the last of my life’s experiences as a “newbie.”

Though uncomfortable, these are the situations that can spur me to grow in confidence as I learn to function without all my old safety nets and props. Best of all, the deepened maturity will far outlast the discomfort of my freshman goofs. ■

5 WAYS TO KEEP LEARNING

(And why you want to)



By Ali Luke, adapted

It's easy to assume that learning ends when you're in your early twenties. You finish university, and go into the “real world” of work. No more term papers, no more exams. A lot of people hardly ever pick up a book again—except perhaps to read on vacation.

But really, whether you want to or not, you're going to carry on learning throughout your life. You'll learn new skills at work. You might learn how to be a parent. You may take up Do It Yourself (DIY), or simply learn enough about your home to maintain it in good condition. You might well have a hobby, which means mastering a new skill.

Some people never give learning much thought. They pick up bits and pieces in an unstructured way, learning just enough to get through the job at hand. Often, they just shrug and give up—calling out a handyman for every little thing, or asking

a colleague at work to do something “difficult” for them.

If you ignore the importance of continuous learning, you'll find:

- **You waste money.** You keep needing to pay for professional help—when it's a task that you could've learned to do yourself. Maybe you “can't cook” so you always eat out.
- **You miss opportunities.** You get passed over for promotions, because you don't show any interest in picking up new skills at work.
- **You lose a great source of fun and fulfillment.** There's enormous satisfaction to be found in learning things, and really getting a new concept or skill. Don't let any bad memories of school put you off.

So how can you keep on learning throughout your adult life?

Find a Career Which Matches Your Interests

If you're in a so-so job, which doesn't really engage you, you won't be very motivated to keep growing your skills and knowledge. Look for a career that hooks into the stuff which interests you: it'll be more rewarding in itself, but it'll also be an easier, faster way for you to progress. You might already know what you'd love to do. What's holding you back? If you're not sure how to get from where you are to where you want to be, then a great starting point for your learning journey is to map out the path!

Look Into Training Courses at Work

Many larger employers offer formal training opportunities, ranging from in-house courses to financial support with a college degree. Talk to your HR department to find out what's on offer, or mention to your manager that you're interested in learning more about a specific area.

If you work for a small employer, don't rule out the value of informal training. Perhaps you can get a colleague to teach you a new software package, or maybe you can get some books and study by yourself on a topic of interest.

Attend Conferences and Seminars

It's often hard to find time to sit down and read a book, work through a guide, or practice a new skill: life just seems to get in the way. By heading to a conference or seminar, you've blocked out time on your schedule for learning and networking. When you're signing up to attend particular panels, don't just go for familiar topics. Pick something that falls outside your comfort zone: even if some of it goes over your head, you're

almost certain to pick up some fresh new ideas.

Get Into a Habit of Regular Reading

One of the most powerful ways to learn is to read regularly. Ask friends or colleagues for recommendations, buy or borrow some books, or search the Internet for interesting articles. Get into the habit of reading at a particular time of day—perhaps on the train to work, during your lunch break, or before dinner in the evenings. This doesn't need to cost you anything—use your local library, download free books onto your Kindle, or ask to borrow from friends. If you drive to work, how about getting audio books to listen to? These are great ways to fill up time where you'd otherwise be a bit bored, or when you need your hands and eyes for what you're doing. (A lot of people like to listen to audio content in the gym, or while doing chores, too.)

Challenge Yourself

Finally, give yourself a challenge or two. Next time you say, "I can't", stop and think. Maybe you really can't cook ...yet. There's nothing stopping you from learning. Sure, you might find that you just don't enjoy cooking. But at least you'll know that you could put together a meal if you had to.

We start at a zero skill level for everything in life. Just because you can't currently play the piano doesn't mean that you'll never be able to. With the internet, there's a huge amount of content on every topic you can think of—and loads of it will be aimed at beginners.

What would you like to learn? What's stopping you? ■

PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF

By Jessica Roberts, adapted



Any mother who has tried to get her toddler to sit still long enough to finish a meal can tell you about children's short attention spans, but there are also moments when they're driven to learn a new skill, such as picking up a small object with chubby little fingers, or crawling, or walking. These new skills require a huge amount of concentration and effort—and a great deal of time, compared to the child's short life up to that point. They also put demands on muscles that are just beginning to learn coordination and are barely strong enough to sustain the child's weight.

When I recently moved to a new country, I went through a difficult time of adjustment. I threw myself into social work, but I felt I wasn't very good at it. For example, I channeled my energy into a toy-and-book drive for needy families, but when it was slow in taking off, I grew discouraged and felt like giving up.

One day I was playing with a coworker's baby, Rafael, who was trying to crawl. He'd start by pushing himself up on shaky arms and eventually get up on all fours, but then he'd get stuck. No matter how much he rocked or wiggled, he couldn't get any closer to a toy just out of his reach. He did manage to scoot

himself backwards, but that only moved him farther from his goal. Eventually, he looked at me with *Pick me up!* written in frustration on his little features.

I could sympathize, as I felt just as frustrated in my new situation. I knew, though, that all that struggling was strengthening his muscles and teaching him about his body. So I picked him up and encouraged him a bit, but then put him back on the floor to try again. He'd have to learn to crawl on his own; I couldn't do it for him.

Suddenly I realized how like Rafael I was. I'd been struggling, trying to fit into a new job, pick up a new language, and familiarize myself with a new culture, and my natural reaction had been to want to be rescued from my struggles. But this time of learning, difficult as it may be, will make me stronger. Even though it is difficult, I have to do the work. I have to persevere. And if Rafael could keep it up, so could I!

Rafael is now happily crawling and starting to pull himself up to stand. I'm also taking baby steps in learning new skills and broadening my horizons. I know we'll both be up and running before long. ■

YOU, ME, AND CHANGE

By Marie Alvero, adapted



Change is a scary thing. Even the best of changes have some downsides or fallout, and the worst of changes usually have some silver lining hidden in them. But no matter how much I know this in my head, sometimes it's hard to believe it in my heart.

Regardless of your position on change, the reality is that change is inevitable. No matter where you go, change will find you. I love routine and predictability. Yet I've discovered that the most meaningful and satisfying things in my life came about as the result of changes. The growth into excellence in a new field: the result of drastic change. A stable and fulfilling marriage: the result of a major change—not to mention, ongoing changes and adjustment. The joy of parenting: also a change. Meaningful friendships: generally born through change. A healthy lifestyle: yep, because I changed.

The truth is that my life would be far scarier if it had never changed or continued to change—potential unfulfilled, passion not pursued, gifts undiscovered, truths unlearned.

Here are some of my tips and tricks for coping with change and the unfamiliar:

1) Reframe the change: Often, when I'm resistant to change or dreading a

specific outcome, it's my perspective on the situation that's off, and getting a new take can make all the difference. Sometimes that new outlook comes from talking with someone who has a broader view of the situation, or sometimes it comes from researching and better informing myself about the change. I can also get it by waiting to form an opinion and being open to whatever happens.

2) Choosing change: Rather than letting change be something unfamiliar that I hide from and resist until it overpowers my life, I can seek out change. Similar to how athletes stay in shape for running a marathon by continually training and improving their performance, I can be ready for change by practicing change in my everyday life. These can be small changes, like trying a new recipe, workout routine, or restaurant; or bigger ones, like pursuing a new hobby, line of work, or friendship.

3) Remember what doesn't change: No matter what else changes, whether for good or bad, within our control or far beyond our reach, God's sovereignty never changes. This has been a source of strength for me in times of change and uncertainty, and strengthened my faith and reliance on His love, care, and providence. ■

Learning and growing

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.—**Abigail Adams**

A man who asks is a fool for five minutes. A man who never asks is a fool for life.
—**Chinese Proverb**

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.—**Henry Ford**

The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live.—**Mortimer Adler**

You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing, and by falling over.
—**Richard Branson**

A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience.—**Oliver Wendell Holmes**

He who learns but does not think, is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.—**Confucius**

Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.—**Bill Gates**

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.
—**Benjamin Franklin**

I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.
—**Winston Churchill**

Never mistake a single mistake with a final mistake.—**F. Scott Fitzgerald**

I never learned from a man who agreed with me.—**Robert A. Heinlein**

