

Experience Your Life ... The tough spots make the easy parts better!

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By Edward B. Toupin

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We all run into hard times, or challenges, as we head down our paths through life. However, some of us seem to get stuck in what appears to be a continuous cycle of 'bad luck.' This cycle slams us down and forces us to battle ghosts, or old problems, in an attempt to free ourselves to move forward in life again. Good luck, bad luck, no luck. It's all a function of our own desires and motivation.

This situation has been quite common with so many people I've seen and in some of my clients. People tend to get lose momentum in challenging times and eventually spiral into a hole from which they feel that they cannot escape. After some time, they begin feel secure with the situation, give up, and accept the problems without question.

---Living in a Hole---

Challenging times can shove you face first down a bottomless pit, if you let them. You try to fight and scratch your way out to find that, there is no way out. However, consider the situation. Is it easier to climb back out the way you fell in or should you look for another way out?

Realize that, as long as you try to go back out the way you fell into the hole, you will remain in the hole. For some reason, the path you were on lead you to the situation, so why continue on that path, in either direction. If you're on the wall of this hole, trying to climb up and out, you risk being hit by everything that falls into that hole after you. Eventually, you're knocked off the wall to, once again, fall to the bottom where you either have to try to climb out again or just give up and take things as they come.

When you run into such a situation, you have to find a different path or solution than the one that got you there. You have to analyze where you are, how you got there, and where you want to be. Once you are confident about your analysis, make a plan on how to move forward toward your vision.

---Battling Ghosts---

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Once you beat a challenging situation, you will feel an intense feeling of success. You have beaten the unbeatable, and won the unwinnable. However, the trick is that, now that you're on the other side of the challenge, your life is now different. You have to determine the best way to restart your life because you've lived in and focused on beating the situation.

Moving forward in life after winning against a challenge is not always a simple task. It's not so much the fact that you got out of the situation. It's the possibility of sinking back into, or creating, a similar situation because of the 'comfort zone' you developed in this situation. Many times, once you're at the end of a challenge, you can find yourself folding back into a similar situation because it is comfortable, similar, and provides that feeling of success.

When life began issuing challenges to me, I had no idea how to deal with them. I would fight, scratch,

kick, and scream to straighten it all back out so that life would return to its previous state. I eventually became so used to fighting to 'survive' that I began slamming every nail with the same sledgehammer. Since I knew this approach always worked, I would use it for every circumstance that I encountered. I began to realize that it wasn't so much the fact that I was fighting to get out of problems, but I found a successful way to win against every problem that came at me. So, to ensure that I always felt successful, I began to find problems at which I could wield my mighty sledgehammer. Instead of moving forward in life toward my goals, I continually found problems that I could beat to achieve immediate satisfaction.

The one thing I realized after a while was that, life could never be what it was. It cannot be as it was one minute or one decade ago, because it is constantly changing and we are constantly growing. When you experience a change or a trauma, life changes. It will never be as it was ... life changes! Life changes through knowledge, through experience, through maturity, and through life itself. I found that fighting to maintain life as it was merely wasted time fighting for the past when in fact I should have been fighting for the future. I needed to focus on obtaining where I was going instead of where I had been.

---Checking out the Other Side---

Once I learned how to cope with traumatic experiences, instead of sitting and waiting, I became curious as to what would happen on the other side. I wanted to learn what I could while, at the same time, plan for a way to get past it and move on to other items that are more beneficial.

Instead of asking, "Who can I smash for this one?" or "Who can I hold liable for this fiasco?" I pulled it inside and began asking "What will I learn when this is over?", "How can I get to the other side of this?", "How can I resolve this for my own benefit?", and "What can I do to get this out of the way and move on with what is beneficial for me?"

This approach is not an easy one, as your ego will try to push you into a good fight to win a small, meaningless battle. But, ask yourself, "Who's life is it anyway?" You can either sit in one place and battle for ego or move forward and battle for success. Let the other people or situations involved stay where they are as it is their responsibility, not yours, to resolve for themselves and move on.

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The idea of giving up and giving in has many definitions. You can look at it from the point of surrender where you give up on your life and remain stuck in a situation. Or, you can view it as a desire for fulfillment and give up on a situation. The point is, don't ever give up or give in, in any way that adversely affects your life.

Focus on where you're going, take on the battles that are of consequence, and let the others fall by the wayside. 'Experience' the things that happen, but don't 'live' them. If you allow circumstances to define you and begin to live them, you will always seek out or create circumstances to maintain the newly defined you.

Another downside of allowing situations to define you is that you can eventually fall into a state of self-pity. Once we fall into self-pity, we are certain to lose the battle against all situations and in the long run we will be missing out on so much. If you take the time to analyze the situation, you can take control and define the solution to your own needs.

---Just Tell Me---

One question I hear many times over is "Why didn't they tell me it would be like this?" or "Why can't you just tell me how to do this?" It just doesn't work that way, for anyone. No one can tell you what to expect, even if they tell you what to expect. This sounds contradictory, but if you are told what to expect of a situation from another person, you are hearing their perspective of the situation. You are given experiences to learn and adapt. If you are unwilling to adapt, then you will not learn and you will stay right where you're at until you make the decision to move forward.

One thing to consider is that the difficult spots in life allow us to appreciate the simple things and the easy spots. This might sound like something 'grandma' might tell you, but this is too true. As you experience, and learn, you grow. As you grow, your sensitivity to certain issues is lessened. This opens up a larger area of growth for you in that your fears are minimized for successive levels of growth. You have the ability to enjoy more with less effort and the things that once looked like major hurdles are now inconsequential bumps.

Regardless of the situation, we can always adapt to new circumstances and situations. In every case, we become more knowledgeable and stronger from the changes. Maturity occurs through experience, not through revelation. Revelations make you dependant on other people. So, consider that life's lessons provide a way to make you independent. Experience, learn, and become independent in life.

--- What's next? ---

The universe gives you experiences to prepare for the path you've chosen. If you allow challenges and trauma to stop you in your tracks, then you will relive those experiences and fight the ghosts of the past until you decide to move forward.

If you take the time to learn and experience life's challenges, you will slowly become desensitized and more knowledgeable. You will eventually learn to move away from the silliness of the minimal to take care of the seriousness of the things that really matter to you. The major problems of old become the

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minor issues not worth taking the time to deal with. It is part of growth because you slowly learn to focus on the things that matter.

Remember that, hard times don't last forever, unless you allow them. When you encounter rough times, this is when you make plans to adjust for better times. Get on another path that can get you back on a track for a better life. You must always be prepared to jump into a new path toward your desires.

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Pianos Need Tender Loving Care Too

By D Ruplinger

Pianos have several thousand parts (8,000–12,000) and many of those parts are moving parts. To keep all the parts in good working order, pianos need regular care.

During the first year of a piano's life it's suggested to have it serviced two to four times. Then talk to your piano technician to decide what frequency to continue service at. Usually twice a year after the first year is recommended, but sometimes once a year is enough. Servicing includes having the piano tuned, regulated as needed, voiced as needed, and eventually having worn parts repaired or replaced as needed (

D Ruplinger is a featured writer for

For more information about pianos,

piano tuning, and piano restoration visit

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