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☞ PURPOSE - TRIALS ☞

It is only by going down into the abyss that we recover the **TREASURES OF LIFE**. *Where you stumble, **there lies your treasure**. The very cave you are afraid to enter turns out to be the source of what you were looking for.*

Joseph Campbell

'But my **DIFFICULTIES** are so enormous.' *Thank God they are! The bigger the difficulty, the more amazing is your profit to Jesus Christ as you draw on His supernatural grace.* Chambers 74

DIFFICULTIES are things that show what we are. Epictetus

I grieved over time squandered in self-indulgence and my **DIFFICULTIES**. A priest said, "*Rejoice and be glad. **You will have a heart of compassion for those who walk that lonely road. God will use your brokenness to bless many people.***" As Julian of Norwich said, "Sin will be not shame, *but honor.*" The dualism between good and evil is overcome by the crucified Rabbi who has reconciled all things in Himself. ***We need not be eaten alive by guilt.*** We can stop lying to ourselves. **THE RECONCILED HEART** *says that everything that has happened to me had to happen to make me who I am without exception.*

Thomas Moore adds this insight: "***our depressions, jealousies, narcissism, and failures are not at odds with the spiritual life. Indeed, they are essential to it. When tended, they prevent the spirit from zooming off into the ozone of perfectionism and spiritual pride.***" Manning 163

Living out of the Center has taught me that every **FAILURE** *succeeds in some way*. It not only provides the opportunity to humble the self, *but also to be gently with the failure of others*. If your life or mine were an untarnished success story, an unbroken upward spiral toward holiness, we might never come to understand the human heart.

Brennan Manning

MISTAKES are part of the dues one pays for a full life. Sophia Loren

*A **PROBLEM** is a concentrated **OPPORTUNITY**. The only people I have ever known to have no problems are in the cemetery. The more problems you have, the more alive you are. *Every problem contains the seeds of its own solution.* I often say, when the Lord wants to give you the greatest value in this world, He doesn't wrap it in a sophisticated package and hand it to you on a silver platter. He is too subtle, too adroit, for that. He takes this big value and buries it at the heart of a big, tough problem. How He must watch with delight when you've got what it takes to break that problem apart and find at its heart what the Bible calls, "the pearl of great price."
*Everybody I've ever known who **succeeded in a big way** in life has done so by breaking problems apart and finding the **value** that was there.**

Yet it is in this whole process of meeting and solving **PROBLEMS that life has its meaning**. Problems are the cutting edge that distinguishes between success and failure. Problems call forth our courage and our wisdom; indeed, they create our courage and our wisdom. It is only because of problems that we grow mentally and spiritually. When we desire to encourage the growth of the human spirit, we challenge and encourage the human capacity to solve problems, just as in school we deliberately set problems for our children to solve. It is through the pain of confronting and resolving problems that we learn. As Benjamin Franklin said, ***Those things that hurt, instruct***. It is for this reason that wise people learn not to dread but actually to welcome problems and actually to welcome the pain of problems.
M. Scott Peck, MD., *The Road Less Traveled*

A **PROBLEM** is a chance for you to do your best. Duke Ellington

PROBLEMS are messages. Shakti Gawain

"Often **BREAKDOWNS** lead to breakthroughs." Manning 22

A clay pot sitting in the sun will always be a clay pot. It has to go through the **WHITE HEAT** of the furnace to become porcelain. Mildred Witte Stouven

THE FIRE - Kristine Wyrzten

I've been through a fire that has deepened my desire, *to know the living God more and more.*

It hasn't been much fun, *but the work that it has done in my life has been worth the hurt.*

You see sometimes we need the hard times to bring us to our knees, otherwise we do as we please and never heed him.

For He always knows what's best and it's when we are distressed that we really come to know God as he is.

Don't think it strange when you desire to serve God and then seem to encounter a **SEVERE TIME OF TESTING**. *God's purpose at every juncture of testing is to make the person more valuable.* Let me illustrate:

A \$5 bar of steel cut into ordinary horseshoes is worth \$10.

A \$5 bar of steel cut into needles is worth \$350.

That same bar of steel cut into delicate springs for watches becomes worth \$250,000. Next time you get discouraged at what God is putting you through, think of that bar of steel!

The tragedy radically alters the direction of our lives, but in our vulnerability and defenselessness we experience the power of Jesus in His present risenness. Manning 108