

YOUR 9-POINT

SURVIVAL

GUIDE

FOR HARD TIMES

HANG IN THERE! BETTER DAYS AHEAD.

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

Accidentally ripping your brand-new shirt or losing your math homework is one thing. Losing a loved one is quite another. We know that trials come in all shapes, sizes . . . and degrees of difficulty. Some are easy to shrug off. Others, not so much.

Here are some tips for those times when a trial feels like more than you can handle.



1. DON'T FORGET TO PRAY

“When sore trials came upon you, did you think to pray?”¹ Heavenly Father knows when things are hard for you. More importantly, He knows how to help you through it. He’s ready to listen, anytime, anywhere (see Alma 34:17-27).

Taking care of your physical body—such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, and exercising regularly—helps immensely when times get tough. For example, think how much easier it is to focus in school after you’ve had a good night’s rest than when you’ve stayed up late. If that holds true during times when life is going smoothly, then it’s just as applicable (and even more crucial) to take care of yourself when you’re dealing with something hard. Give yourself every advantage—and don’t give yourself disadvantages—as you push through this.

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, “Spirit and body, when joined together, become a living soul of supernal worth. Indeed, we are children of God—physically and spiritually.”³



2. BE POSITIVE—LITERALLY

You’ve probably heard a million times to “think positively,” or “just stay positive.” Sometimes, though, that’s easier said than done. Here’s another way to think of being positive.

In buildings, certain rooms are often kept at “positive pressure,” which means air is pumped into the room so that any openings (like doors or windows) cause air to flow out rather than in. Why do this? Well, in a hospital, for instance, patients might be kept in a room at positive pressure to make it harder for airborne bacteria or harmful chemicals to enter.

You can be like that room. If you’re constantly pouring good things into your mind, heart, and soul—things like scripture study, uplifting music, or words of the prophets—you become so full that it’s much harder for negative thoughts or difficult circumstances to affect you. On those days when it’s too challenging to conjure a smile, try to conjure 10 more minutes for the scriptures. Keep building that positive pressure. It will also bless others around you.



3. TAKE CARE OF YOUR TEMPLE

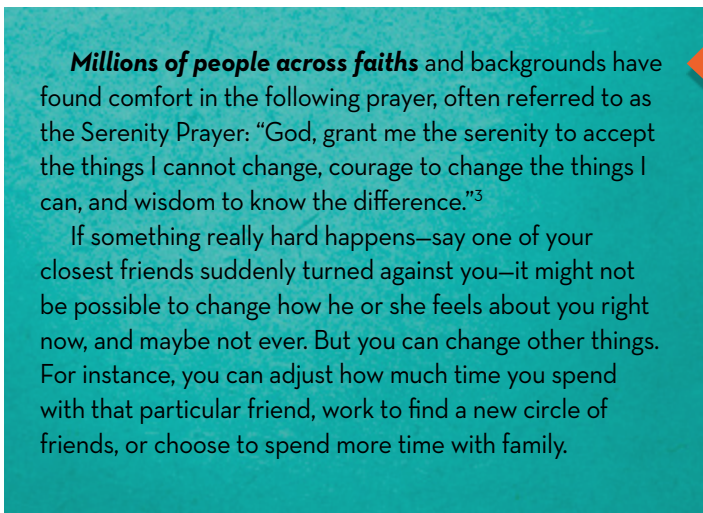


4. FIND WAYS TO DE-STRESS

In archery, a bow that's always strung tight will eventually lose its spring. The power in a bow lies in its ability to snap back into position after being bent. But if it's always bent and under stress, that power fades and can even disappear.

In the same way, it's not healthy for us to remain in a constant state of stress. We need to find ways to get rid of bad feelings, especially when times are rough.

Find a few activities that help you unwind, and then schedule them regularly. Going for a walk or jog when your emotions run high, for example, almost always helps to clear your head. Try doing jigsaw puzzles. Maybe take up an instrument. Or scribble down all your negative thoughts on a piece of paper and then shred the paper into a thousand pieces. Whatever works for you, work to find healthy ways to get rid of unwanted emotions so you can make room for better ones.

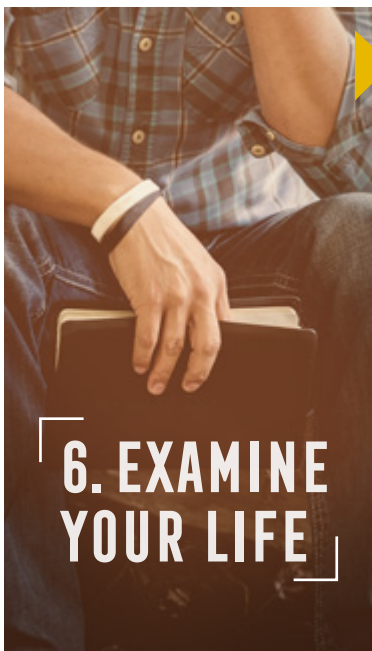


Millions of people across faiths and backgrounds have found comfort in the following prayer, often referred to as the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."³

If something really hard happens—say one of your closest friends suddenly turned against you—it might not be possible to change how he or she feels about you right now, and maybe not ever. But you can change other things. For instance, you can adjust how much time you spend with that particular friend, work to find a new circle of friends, or choose to spend more time with family.



5. CHANGE WHAT YOU CAN; LET GO OF THE REST



6. EXAMINE YOUR LIFE

Speaking of changing what we can, one of the first areas to examine is our choices. If we're breaking commandments, trials can follow.

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928-2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Throughout your life you have seen the terrible consequences of incorrect choices individuals make that damage their lives and often hurt others. . . . When viewed honestly, they are simply violations of the commandments of God that bring the tragic consequences He has warned will follow serious transgression."⁴

Here's something to keep in mind, though. The appearance of a trial does not necessarily mean you've done anything wrong. In fact, often it doesn't. Elder Jörg Klebingat of the Seventy taught, "Some trials come through your own disobedience or negligence. Other trials come because of the negligence of others or simply because this is a fallen world. When these trials come, the adversary's minions begin broadcasting that you did something wrong, that this is a punishment, a sign that Heavenly Father does not love you. Ignore that!"⁵

Yes, ignore those messages. Set matters straight where needed, but don't let the adversary turn a trial into a guilt trip when you've done nothing wrong. You already have enough going on.

At first glance it might not seem to make sense, but when we're trudging through trying times, one of the best ways to lift our own spirits is to lift up someone else. And you don't even have to do something huge or impressive. One of our hymns says it beautifully:

*Slightest actions often
Meet the sorest needs,
For the world wants daily
Little kindly deeds.⁶*

7. SERVE SOMEBODY ELSE



NOTES

1. "Did You Think to Pray?" *Hymns*, no. 140.
2. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 1998 general conference.
3. Adapted from an original prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr. See *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses* (1987), 251.
4. Richard G. Scott, Oct. 1998 general conference.
5. Jörg Klebingat, Oct. 2014 general conference.
6. "Scatter Sunshine," *Hymns*, no. 230.

When truly hard things happen in your life, it's not always easy to find a silver lining to be glad about. Especially in the moment. Yet when you seek closely, there's always something you gain from each challenge, even if it's to learn empathy so you can better help others who go through similar trials in the future.

In 2 Nephi 2:2, Lehi teaches his son Jacob, "Thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain."

You aren't going through these trials for nothing! This same trial that's so painful right now might give you the strength and wisdom you need to do something incredibly important down the road. Something, in fact, that you wouldn't have been able to do at all if this trial hadn't come into your life now.

Remember, God is with you every step of the way. So keep taking those steps. You'll get through this with Him. **NE**

8. DON'T STAND ALONE; STAND STRONG TOGETHER



The scriptures teach us to yoke ourselves with Christ (see Matthew 11:29) or, in other words, to allow Christ to both strengthen us and take part of our burden.

The same goes for the people in your life who love and care for you. Make sure you allow those who want to help you, to help you. And do the same for them. We stand stronger when we stand together.

9. LOOK FOR THE LESSON

