



PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES



**By Elder Dieter F.
Uchtdorf**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

You Are the Hero of Your Own Story

WHEN I THINK of the youth and young adults of the Church of Jesus Christ, I feel a deep tenderness toward you. When I think of you, I see me!

As a young man, I stood at the fence of an international airport and watched those magnificent flying machines.¹ The take-offs and landings were a miraculous sight. One that stirred my soul! How I wanted to be in the cockpit of one of those impressive airplanes and feel the thrill of rising up from the ground, climbing above the clouds, and traveling unto new horizons.

But was that dream possible? I was not born into wealth. My family had twice been refugees, taking only what we could carry. I was considered by some to be an outsider. While other children played with their friends, I had to spend my afternoons and weekends working in our family laundry business, often as a delivery boy.

I say this because some of you might also be wondering if your dreams will ever become reality. I understand what you are feeling. If I could go back in time and talk to that young boy who stood on the other side of the fence yearning for a better future, I would say:

“It’s not going to be easy, but you can do it. You will be all right. The journey will be filled with challenges, Dieter. But the struggle itself will transform you into the person you want to be. Work hard. Be consistent. Focus on the things you can change, not so much on the things you cannot change. Have faith. Have hope. Trust in God. Know that if you do your part, things will work out.”

This is also my advice to you today.

You Are the Hero of Your Own Story

My dear friends, from my earliest childhood I loved adventure stories. Many of those stories start with a character who has a problem. The bigger the problem, the more compelling the story. And what the character doesn’t know is that things



are going to get a lot worse! They get so bad, in fact, that the hero may start to feel that he or she will never overcome the challenges before him or her.

This is, until something special happens in their lives, like a trusted person or a source of wisdom appears to help them gain enough knowledge and insight to formulate a new plan. The rest of the story is about how the hero follows the plan and overcomes the difficulties that confront him or her.

In a past general conference, I spoke about Bilbo Baggins—a very ordinary

hobbit who sets out on an adventure to slay a dragon. Gandalf was his source of wisdom and help. Or think of Obi-Wan Kenobi, who helps Luke Skywalker learn how to master the Force and defeat the Death Star. Anne of Green Gables has Marilla and Matthew, who love her and guide her as she goes from being an unwanted orphan to an accomplished student and beloved friend. Hermione Granger and Harry Potter have caring teachers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to help them learn what they need to do to overcome “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.”



**Whether
you feel
like a hero
or not, you
are one!**

And now, I come to you. Whether you feel like a hero or not, you are one! You are the hero of your own life's story! Perhaps you are standing before a fence of your own, yearning for something you want to become. At times, you may feel alone—but you are not.

You are a child of God. He is your Heavenly Father. He loves you and is only a prayer away. You have Jesus Christ. The effects of His Atonement are always available to take away the pain and loneliness of mistakes. You have caring bishops and other Church leaders and your ward family who can guide and help you.

Trust That God Will Guide Your Steps

No matter how far away your destination feels, know this: you may not get to where you want to go in a day or a week or even a year. But if you continue to place one foot in front of the other and strive each day to follow your plan, things will work out and you will reach your goals. You will certainly find surprises and unexpected challenges during your adventure, but those are the things that make a successful story—your life story! And, especially, remember that if you trust in the Lord, learn of Him, have faith in Him, He will direct your path.²

My beloved friends, fellow travelers on the road of this great adventure of mortality, do not be discouraged. Do not give up. The future is bright! Someday you will look back on the person you are now with kindness and compassion, and you will know then that the steps you took today molded you into the wonderful person you have yet to become. 🙏

NOTES

1. See *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines* (1965), a British period comedy film.
2. See Proverbs 3:5–6

