

HOW TO

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It is a great matter to know just how to rest—how to be quiet when all around seems tumultuous.

We irritate and excite our souls about the coming emergency, and we approach it with worn and feverish spirits, and so mar our Master's purpose and work.

When the crisis comes, He will tell me what to do. The orders are not given until the appointed day. Why should I fume and fret and worry as to what the sealed envelope contains? When the hour strikes, the secrets shall be revealed.

And when the crisis comes, He will tell me what to say. I need not begin to prepare my retorts and my responses. What shall I say when death comes, to me or to my loved one? Never mind, He will tell me. And what when sorrow or persecution comes? Never mind, He will tell me.

—J.H. Jowett (19th-century English Congregationalist)

attitude is everything

By Francie Baltazar-Schwartz

Jerry was the kind of guy you love to hate. He was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

He was a unique restaurant manager because he had several waiters who had followed him around from restaurant to restaurant. The reason the waiters followed Jerry was because of his attitude. He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Jerry was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation.

Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Jerry and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?"

Jerry replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, 'Jerry, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood.' I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life."

"Yeah, right. It's not that easy," I protested.

"Yes it is," Jerry said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation

is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. You choose to be in a good or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life."

I reflected on what Jerry said. Soon thereafter, I left the restaurant industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Jerry did something you are never supposed to do in the restaurant business: He left the back door open one morning and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers. While trying to open the safe, his hand, shaking from nervousness, slipped off the combination. The robbers panicked and shot him.

Luckily, Jerry was found relatively quickly and rushed to the local trauma center. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body. I saw Jerry about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Wanna see my scars?"

I declined, but did ask him what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place.

"The first thing that went through my mind was that I should have locked the back

door," Jerry replied. "Then, as I lay on the floor, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live, or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked.

Jerry continued, "The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the emergency room and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read, 'He's a dead man.' I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big, burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Jerry. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes,' I replied. The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, 'Bullets!' Over their laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead.'"

Jerry lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything.

THIS TOO WILL pass

If I can endure for this minute
Whatever is happening to me,
No matter how heavy my heart is,
Or how dark the moment may be—

If I can remain calm and quiet
With all my world crashing about me,
Secure in the knowledge God loves me
When everyone else seems to doubt me—

If I can but keep on believing
What I know in my heart to be true,
That "darkness will fade with the morning,"
And that this will pass away, too—

Then nothing in life can defeat me,
For as long as this knowledge remains,
I can suffer whatever is happening,
For I know God will break all the chains
That are binding me tight in the "darkness"
And trying to fill me with fear—
For there is no night without dawning,
And I know that "my morning" is near.

—Helen Steiner Rice

Dr. Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh was famous for his prayers. He always found something to thank God for, even in bad times. One stormy morning a member of his congregation thought, *The preacher will have nothing to thank God for on a wretched morning like this.*

But Whyte began his prayer, "We thank Thee, O God, that it is not always like this."

Keep me,
Lord. Darkness is
setting in.

I don't have the
strength to face it.

I'm weak, but You're strong.
Be strong for me, Lord.

Get me through the
night and help me greet the
dawn with praise, because
You are there. You can meet
whatever comes my way.

Thank You for keeping
me, Lord.

A PRAYER FOR DIFFICULT TIMES