

feelings. It may even involve confronting the person/s who have caused the problem, and forgiving them, or asking for forgiveness if you have hurt them. Saying 'I'm sorry' can be the most healing words you could ever say.

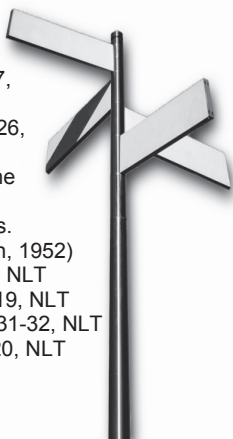
The Bible is full of helpful suggestions. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian Church he said, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. Instead be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God, through Christ has forgiven you." ⁶ James said to his people, "My dear brothers (and sisters), take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God deserves." ⁷

E. Stanley Jones reminds us: "Love is positive; hate is negative; love heals; hate wounds; love lasts; hate stings itself to death." ³ Love and concern for others is the only way to keep families and nations together. Love holds a person together.

Go out with love within and the world will be lovely. It will respond in love and your road will lead to a healthy emotional outlook.

Notes:

1. Proverbs 23:7, NKJV
2. Ephesians 4:26, NLT
3. Quoted in "The Way", by E. Stanley Jones. (H&S, London, 1952)
4. Mathew 5:22, NLT
5. Proverbs 27:19, NLT
6. Ephesians 4:31-32, NLT
7. James 1:19-20, NLT



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LOOKING on the BRIGHT side



By Joanna D'Costa

A stone in our path can be considered a stumbling-block or a stepping-stone.

It all depends on the way we look at it. If you have a lemon, how about making lemonade? Looking at the bright side of things can make the difference between success and failure in life.

*Doubt sees the obstacles,
Faith sees the way.
Doubt sees the darkest night,
Faith sees the day.
Doubt dreads to take a step,
Faith soars on high.
Doubt whispers, "Who believes?"
Faith whispers, "I".*

I don't know who wrote this poem but I thought I would share it with you because I feel it is full of truth. When things aren't going too well it's very easy to get negative. We start thinking the whole world is against us and nothing will ever go right again. But given time things generally work out. It's during times like this, reading a poem like the one above helps to get things back into perspective. Things won't immediately work out on simply reading the verse, but it helps us stop to consider whether we are looking at everything from the right

angle. More often than not we aren't.

Pessimism as a lifestyle

Unfortunately, there are many of us who seem to get much more satisfaction from looking on the dark side of life than we do from seeing if there is a ray of hope.

We have all heard about the person who sees the glass of juice as being half empty rather than half full. We waste our time regretting what is lost rather than enjoying what is still there.

There are many of us who always look at life through pessimistic eyes, who are determined to cast a shadow on even the brightest day. We look for difficulties rather than opportunities. Often the difficulties become so great that any opportunity that might have been there sadly disappears. But difficulties are there to be overcome, not given in to.

Does faith help?

Some people think that if we firmly believe in God and are full of faith, we will never face any difficulties – never have any financial worries, never fall ill, and so forth. I

personally believe that although God doesn't cause difficulties to come upon us – that is usually our own doing – he does allow things to happen to us. He has the power to remove all things in our path but sometimes chooses not to – for our own good.

Difficulties can be growth opportunities

Instead of viewing an obstacle as a *trial*, try looking on it as a *challenge*. A slight change in one's approach makes such a world of difference! Trials and difficulties if looked upon in the right perspective can be seen as opportunities to learn and grow. If everything goes too smoothly how can we ever be challenged to better ourselves? Even gold needs to be refined through the test of fire.

When we get ill, for instance, our reaction is to rail against fate, to resent bitterly such untimely interference with life's routine. Yet our illness can confer substantial benefits. It blamelessly releases us from a too-busy world, sharpens our mental and spiritual perceptions and permits a clearer perspective on our lives. Illness induces humility, gives us time to examine our inner selves and often scares us into reforming ourselves.

Every cloud has a silver lining

Many have used their sick-bed as a place to wonder and dream. In 1873 American physician Edward Livingston Trudeau went as a young doctor to the mountains where he expected to die of tuberculosis. He did not die. As he lay in bed he had a vision of a hospital to help others. He raised money and laboured and his dream became the great sanatorium at Saranac that has



if life gives you lemons



...make lemonade

helped thousands of tuberculosis patients. Trudeau's affliction turned an unknown doctor into a physician of worldwide fame.

Florence Nightingale, too ill to move from her bed, reorganised the hospital system of England.

Attitude matters

Life can be so much more happy, untroubled and fulfilling if our attitude towards it is optimistic - if we can look on the bright side of it. This does not mean we should be unrealistic and ignore the difficulties, but rather concentrate on any good that might come out of any situation we might be in.

Several months ago there was a burglary at our home while we were in it. It was a very traumatic experience and we had two choices – to dwell on the dark side or to see if there was any good in this seemingly dire situation. Surprisingly, there was plenty to be joyful about. All we lost was material things and no one was hurt.

The thieves showed us the weak spots in our security, which we were able to strengthen. Our faith in the police force was renewed – they were very cooperative, kind and concerned. They still patrol around

our home on a regular basis, especially at night.

Finally what touched us the most was the overwhelming love, support and concern shown to us by our entire neighbourhood. Who could imagine that so much good could come out of a burglary? Personally, I feel that seeing the bright side helped us recover faster and we have been able to put the situation far behind us.

We need to adopt optimism as a standard or pessimism will be justified. Pessimism engenders despair, which in turn gives way to misfortune and failure. If we believe we will fall we will fall. The world is not perfect and we will suffer misfortune, but we can rise above any problem that comes our way - by the way we approach it!

Joanna D'Costa lives in Bangalore, India with her husband Joe and three children. She teaches French in school and pre-university and also writes for the "Living Light" magazine in India. Joanna can be contacted at wcgjdc@dataone.in

