

Chicken Soup for the Soul

by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen

Introduction

We know everything we need to know to end the needless emotional suffering that many people currently experience. High self-esteem and personal effectiveness are available to anyone willing to take the time to pursue them.

It is difficult to translate the spirit of a live presentation into the written word. Stories we tell every day have had to be rewritten five times to work as well in print as they do live. When you are reading these stories, please do get everything you ever learned in your speed-reading classes. Slow down. Listen to the words in your heart as well as in your mind. Savor each story. Let it touch you. Ask yourself, what does it awaken in me? What does it suggest for my life? What feeling or action does it call forth from my inner being? Let yourself have a personal relationship with each story.

Some stories will speak louder to you than others. Some will have deeper meaning. Some will make you cry. Some will make you laugh. Some will give you a warm feeling all over. Some may hit you right between the eyes. There is no right reaction. There is only your reaction. Let it happen and let it be.

Don't hurry through this book. Take your time. Enjoy it. Savor it. Engage it with your whole being. It represents thousands of hours of culling the "best of the best" from our 40 years of combined experience. One last thing: Reading a book like this is a little like sitting down to eat a meal of all desserts. It may be a little too rich. It is a meal with no vegetables, salad or bread. It is all essence with very little froth.

In our seminars and workshops we take more time to set up and discuss the implications of each story. There are more explanations and explorations of how to apply the lessons and principles to your everyday life. Don't just read these stories. Take the time to digest them and make them your own.

True Love

Moses Mendelssohn, the grandfather of the well-known German composer, was far from being handsome. Along with a rather short stature, he had a grotesque hunchback.

One day he visited a merchant in Hamburg who had a lovely daughter named Frumtje. Moses fell hopelessly in love with her. But Frumtje was repulsed by his misshapen appearance.

When it came time for him to leave, Moses gathered his courage and climbed the stairs to her room to take one last opportunity to speak with her. She was a vision of heavenly beauty, but caused him great sadness by her refusal to look at him. After several attempts at conversation, Moses shyly asked, "Do you believe in images are made in heaven?"

"Yes," she answered, still looking at the floor. "And so you?"

"Yes I do," he replied. "You see, in heaven at the birth of each boy, the Lord announces which girl he will marry. When I was born, my future bride was pointed out to me. Then the Lord added, 'But your wife will be humpbacked.'"

"Right then and there I called out, 'Oh Lord, a humpbacked woman would be a tragedy. Please, Lord, give me the hump and let her be beautiful.'"

Then Frumtje looked up into his eyes and was stirred by some deep memory. She reached out and gave Mendelssohn her hand and later became his devoted wife.

Barry and Joyce Vissell

little. Would you like one?" The six-foot-two, 230-pound bus driver got out of his seat, stepped down and said, "Why not?"

Lee hugged him, gave him a heart and waved good-bye as the bus pulled out. The TV crew was speechless. Finally, the commentator said, "I have to admit, I'm very impressed."

One day Lee's friend Nancy Johnston showed up on his doorstep. Nancy is a professional clown and she was wearing her clown costume, makeup and all. "Lee, grab a bunch of your Hugger Kits and let's go out to the home for the disabled."

When they arrived at the home, they started giving out balloon hats, hearts and hugs to the patients. Lee was uncomfortable. He had never before hugged people who were terminally ill, severely retarded or quadriplegic. It was definitely a stretch. But after a while it became easier, with Nancy and Lee acquiring an entourage of doctors, nurses and orderlies who followed them from ward to ward.

After several hours they entered the last ward. These were 34 of the worst cases Lee had seen in his life. The feeling was so grim it took his heart away. But out of their commitment to share their love and to make a difference, Nancy and Lee started working their way around the room followed by the entourage of medical staff, all of whom by now had hearts on their collars and balloon hats on their heads.

Finally, Lee came to the last person, Leonard. Leonard was wearing a big white bib which he was drooling on. Lee looked at Leonard dribbling onto his bib and said, "Let's go, Nancy. There's no way we can get through to this person." Nancy replied, "C'mon, Lee. He's a fellow human being, too, isn't he?" Then she placed a funny balloon hat on his head. Lee took one of his little red hearts and placed it on Leonard's bib. He took a deep breath, leaned down and gave Leonard a hug.

All of a sudden Leonard began to squeal, "Eeeeehh! Eeeeehh!" Some of the other patients in the room began to clang things together. Lee turned to the staff for some sort of explanation only to find that every doctor, nurse and orderly was crying. Lee asked the head nurse, "What's going on?"

Lee will never forget what she said: "This is the first time in 23 years we've ever seen Leonard smile."

How simple it is to make a difference in the lives of others.

Jack Canfield and Mark V. Hansen

It Can't Happen Here?

We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.

Virginia Satir

We always teach people to hug each other in our workshops and seminars. Most people respond by saying, "You could never hug people where I work." Are you sure?

Here is a letter from a graduate of one of our seminars.

Dear Jack,

I started out this day in rather a bleak mood. My friend Rosalind stopped over and asked me if I was giving hugs today. I just grumbled something but then began to think about hugs and everything during the week. I would look at the sheets you gave us on How to Keep the Seminar Alive and I would cringe when I got to the part about giving and getting hugs because I couldn't imagine giving hugs to the people at work.

Well I decided to make it "hugs day" and I started giving hugs to the customers who came to my counter. It was great to see how people just brightened up. An MBA student jumped up on top of the counter and did a dance. Some people actually came back and asked for more. These two Xerox repair guys, who were kind of just walking along not really talking to each other, were so surprised, they just woke up and suddenly were talking and laughing down the hall.

It feels like I hugged everybody in the Wharton Business School, plus whatever was wrong with me this morning, which included some physical pain, is all gone. I'm sorry that this letter is so long but I'm just really excited. The neatest thing was, at one point there were about 10 people all hugging each other out in front of my counter. I couldn't believe this was happening.

Love, Pamela Rogers

P.S.: On the way home I hugged a policeman on 37th Street. He said, "Wow! Policemen never get hugs. Are you sure you don't want to throw something at me?"

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine. He thinks I'm a creative genius. Then he put this blue ribbon that says 'Who I Am Makes A Difference' on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon and I thought about you. I want to honor you.

"My days are really hectic and when I come home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and, well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides, you mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you!"

The startled boy started to sob and sob and he couldn't stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, "I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn't think you loved me. Now I don't need to."

Helice Bridges

I held on lightly to the commuter strap overhead and gave him a slow look of disgust and dismissal. I planned to take this turkey apart, but he had to make the first move. I wanted him mad, so I pursed my lips and blew him an insolent kiss.

"All right!" he hollered. "You're gonna get a lesson!" He gathered himself for a rush at me.

A fraction of a second before he could move, someone shouted "Hey!" It was earsplitting. I remember the strangely joyous, lilting quality of it—as though you and a friend had been searching diligently for something, and he had suddenly stumbled upon it. "Hey!"

I wheeled to my left; the drunk spun to his right. We both stared down at a little old Japanese man. He must have been well into his seventies, this tiny gentleman, sitting there immaculate in his kimono. He took no notice of me but beamed delightedly at the laborer, as though he had a most important, most welcome secret to share.

"C'mere," the old man said in an easy, familiar, beckoning to the drunk. "C'mere and talk with me." He waved his hands lightly.

The big man followed, as if on a string. He planted his feet belligerently in front of the old gentleman and roared above the clacking wheels, "Why the hell should I talk to you?" The drunk now had his back to me. If his elbow moved so much as a millimeter, I'd drop him in his socks.

The old man continued to beam at the laborer. "What'cha been drinkin'?" he asked, his eyes sparkling with interest. "I been drinkin' sake," the laborer bellowed back, "and it's none of your business!" Flecks of spittle spattered the old man.

"Oh, that's wonderful," the old man said, "absolutely wonderful! You see, I love sake, too. Every night, me and my wife (she's 76, you know), we warm up a little bottle of sake and take it out into the garden, and we sit on an old wooden bench. We watch the sun go down, and we look to see how our persimmon tree is doing. My greatgrandfather planted that tree, and we worry about whether it will recover from those ice storms we had last winter. Our tree has done better than I expected, though, especially when you consider the poor quality of the soil. It is gratifying to watch when we take our sake and go out to enjoy the evening—even when it rains!" He looked up at the laborer, eyes twinkling.

As he struggled to follow the old man, his face began to soften. His fists slowly unclenched. "Yeah," he said. "I love persimmons, too...." His voice trailed off.

Start With Yourself

The following words were written on the tomb of an Anglican Bishop in the Crypts of Westminster Abbey:

When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country.

But it, too, seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it.

And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize: If I had only changed my self first, then by example I would have changed my family.

From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world.

Anonymous

The Rules For Being Human

1. You will receive a body.

You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period of this time around.

2. You will learn lessons.

You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called Life. Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant and stupid.

3. There are no mistakes, only lessons.

Growth is a process of trial and error: Experimentation. The "failed" experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately "works."

4. A lesson is repeated until learned.

A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can then go on to the next lesson.

5. Learning lessons does not end.

There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned.

6. "There" is no better than "here."

When your "there" has become a "here," you will simply obtain another "there" that will again look better than "here."

7. Others are merely mirrors of you.

You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects something you love or hate about yourself.

8. What you make of your life is up to you.

You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. The choice is yours.

9. Your answers lie inside you.

The answers to Life's questions lie inside you. All you need to do is look, listen and trust.

10. You will forget all this.

Cherie Carter-Scott

phone so we could hear the latest! It was just past 9:00 when the phone rang and it was Dad on the car phone, "Bobbie, how can I possibly go home without a gift for your mom? It would be the first time in nearly 50 years I didn't get her perfume for Christmas!" By now my entire dinner party was engineering this plan. We called my sister to get the names of nearby open shopping centers so they could stop for the only gift my dad would consider giving Mom—the same brand of perfume he has given her every year at Christmas.

At 9:52 that evening, my brother and my dad left a little shopping mall in Minnesota for the trip home. At 11:50 they drove into the farmstead. My father, acting like a giggling school boy, stepped around the corner of the house and stood out of sight.

"Mom, I visited Dad today and he said to bring you his laundry," my brother said as he handed my mom the suitcases. "Oh," she said softly and sadly, "I miss him so much, I might as well do these now."

Said my father coming out from his hiding, "You won't have time to do them tonight."

After my brother called me to relay this touching scene between our parents—these two friends and lovers—I phoned my mother. "Merry Christmas, Mother!"

"Oh, you kids...," she said in a crackling voice, choking back tears. She was unable to continue. My guests cheered.

Though I was 2,000 miles away from them, it was one of the most special Christmases I've shared with my parents. And, of course, to date my parents have not been apart on Christmas Eve. That's the strength of children who love and honor their parents and, of course, the committed and marvelous marriage my parents share.

"Good parents," Jonas Salk once told me, "give their children roots and wings. Roots to know where home is, wings to fly away and exercise what's been taught them." If gaining the skills to lead one's life purposefully and having a safe nest and being welcomed back to it is the legacy of parents, then I believe I chose my parents well. It was this past Christmas that I most fully understood why it was necessary that these two people be my parents. Though wings have taken me around the globe, eventually to nest in lovely California, the roots my parents gave me will be an indelible foundation forever.

Bettie B. Youngs

The Perfect American Family

It is 10:30 on a perfect Saturday morning and we are, for the moment, the perfect American family. My wife has taken our six-year-old to his first piano lesson. Our 14-year-old has not yet roused from his slumber. The four-year-old watches tiny, anthropomorphic beings hurl one another from cliffs in the other room. I sit at the kitchen table reading the newspaper.

Aaron Malachi, the four-year-old, apparently bored by the cartoon carnage and the considerable personal power obtained by holding the television's remote control, enters my space.

"I'm hungry," he says.

"Want some more cereal?"

"No."

"Want some yogurt?"

"No."

"Want some eggs?"

"No. Can I have some ice cream?"

"No."

For all I know, ice cream may be far more nourishing than processed cereal or antibiotic-laden eggs but, according to my cultural values, it is wrong to have ice cream at 10:45 on a Saturday morning.

Silence. About four seconds. "Daddy, we have very much of life left, don't we?"

"Yes, we have lots of life left, Aaron."

"Me and you and Mommy?"

"That's right."

"And Isaac?"

"Yes."

"And Ben?"

"Yes. You and me and Mommy and Isaac and Ben."

"We have very much of life left. Until all the people die."

"What do you mean?"

"Until all the people die and the dinosaurs come back."

Aaron sits down on the table, cross-legged like a Buddha, in the center of my newspaper.

"What do you mean, Aaron, 'until all the people die'?"

Preview from Notesale.
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"You said everybody dies. When everybody dies, then the dinosaurs will come back. The cavemen lived in caves, dinosaur caves. Then the dinosaurs came back and squished 'em."

I realize that already for Aaron life is a limited economy, a resource with a beginning and an end. He envisions himself and us somewhere along that trajectory, a trajectory that ends in uncertainty and loss.

I am faced with an ethical decision. What should I do now? Should I attempt to give him God, salvation, eternity? Should I toss him some spiel like, "Your body is just a shell and after you die, we will all be together in spirit forever"?

Or should I leave him with his uncertainty and his anxiety because I think it's real? Should I try to make him an anxious existentialist or should I try to make him feel better?

I don't know. I stare at the newspaper. The Celtics are consistently losing on Friday night. Larry Bird is angry at somebody, but I can't see who, because Aaron's foot is in the way. I don't know but my neurotic, addictive, middle-class sensibility is telling me that this is a very important moment, a moment when Aaron's ways of constructing his world are being formed. Or maybe my neurotic, addictive, middle-class sensibility is just making me think that. If life and death are an illusion, then why should I trifle with how someone else understands them?

On the table Aaron plays with an "army guy," raising his arms and balancing him on his shaky legs. It was Kevin McHale that Larry Bird was angry at. No, not Kevin McHale, it was Jerry Sichting. But Jerry Sichting is no longer with the Celtics. Whatever happened to Jerry Sichting? Everything dies, everything comes to an end. Jerry Sichting is playing for Sacramento or Orlando or he has disappeared.

I should not trifle with how Aaron understands life and death because I want him to have a solid sense of structure, a sense of the permanence of things. It's obvious what a good job the nuns and priests did with me. It was agony or bliss. Heaven and hell were not connected by long distance service. You were on God's team or you were in the soup, and the soup was hot. I don't want Aaron to get burned, but I want him to have a strong frame. The neurotic but unavoidable anxiety can come later.

Is that possible? It is possible to have a sense that God, spirit, karma, Y*H*W*H, something—is transcendent, without traumatizing the presentness of a person, without beating it into them? Can we have our

An architect knows that if he builds with care, his structure may stand for centuries. A teacher knows that if he builds with love and truth, what he builds will last forever.

I am a warrior, daily doing battle against peer pressure, negativity, fear, conformity, prejudice, ignorance and apathy. But I have great allies: Intelligence, Curiosity, Parental Support, Individuality, Creativity, Faith, Love and Laughter all rush to my banner with indomitable support.

And who do I have to thank for this wonderful life I am so fortunate to experience, but you the public, the parents. For you have done me the great honor to entrust to me your greatest contribution to eternity, your children.

And so I have a past that is rich in memory. I have a present that is challenging, adventurous and fun because I am allowed to spend my days with the future.

I am a teacher ... and I thank God for it every day.

John W. Schlatter

Finally, someone said, "We could do a radio show across Canada."

Bob said, "That's a great idea," and wrote it down.

Before he had it written, someone said, "You can't do a radio show across Canada. We don't have radio stations across Canada." That was a pretty valid objection. They only had stations in Ontario and Quebec.

Templeton replied, "That's why we can. That stays." But this was a really strong objection because radio stations are very competitive. They usually don't work together and to get them to do so would be virtually impossible according to the standard way of thinking.

All of a sudden someone suggested, "You could get Harvey Kirk and Lloyd Robertson, the biggest names in Canadian broadcasting to anchor the show." (That would be like getting Tom Brokaw and Sam Donaldson to anchor the show. They are anchors on national TV. They are not going to go on radio.) At that point it was absolutely amazing how fast and furious the creative ideas began to flow.

That was on Friday. The following Tuesday they had a radiothon.

They had 50 radio stations all across the country that agreed to broadcast it. It didn't matter who got the credit as long as the people in Barrie got the money. Harvey Kirk and Lloyd Robertson anchored the show and they succeeded in raising 3 million dollars in 3 hours within 3 business days!

You see you can do anything if you put your focus on how to do it rather than on why you can't.

Bob Proctor

Thanksgiving really is: Giving good thanks, not eating turkey. C'mon. Let's go do it!"

Because I had to do a radio interview first, I asked my partners to get us started by getting a van. When I returned from the interview, they said "We just can't do it. There are no vans in all of New York. The rent-a-car places are all out of vans. They're just not available."

I said, "Look, the bottom line is that if we want something, we can make it happen! All we have to do is take action. There are plenty of vans here in New York City. We just don't have one. Let's go get one."

They insisted, "We've called everywhere. There aren't any."

I said, "Look down at the street. Look down there. Do you see all those vans?" They said, "Yeah, we see them."

"Let's go get one," I said. First I tried walking out in front of vans as they were driving down the street. I learned something about New York drivers that day: They don't stop; they speed up.

Then we tried waiting by the light. We'd go over and knock on the window and the driver would roll it down, looking at us kind of leery, and I'd say "Hi. Since today is Thanksgiving, we'd like to know if you would be willing to drive us to Harlem so we can feed some people." Every time the driver would look away quickly, furiously roll up the window and pull away without saying anything.

Eventually we got better at asking. We'd knock on the window, they'd roll it down and we'd say, "Today is Thanksgiving. We'd like to help some underprivileged people, and we're curious if you'd be willing to drive us to an underprivileged area that we have in mind here in New York City." That seemed slightly more effective but still didn't work. Then we started offering people \$100 to drive us. That got us even closer, but when we told them to take us to Harlem, they said no and drove off.

We had talked to about two dozen people who all said no. My partners were ready to give up on the project, but I said, "It's the law of averages: somebody is going to say yes." Sure enough, the perfect van drove up. It was perfect because it was extra big and would accommodate all of us. We went up, knocked on the window and we asked the driver, "Could you take us to a disadvantaged area? We'll pay you a hundred dollars." The driver said, "You don't have to pay me. I'd be happy to take you. In fact, I'll take you to some of the most difficult spots in the whole city." Then he reached over on the seat and grabbed his hat. As he put it on, I noticed that it said, "Salvation Army." The man's name was

About eight weeks later, I was driving down a California freeway, minding my own business at 10:30 in the morning. Suddenly a gorgeous red-and-white Cadillac passed me. I looked at the car because it was a beautiful car. And the driver looked at me and smiled, and I smiled back because I always smile. Now I was in deep trouble. Have you ever done that? I tried to pretend that I hadn't looked. "Who me? I didn't look at you!" He followed me for the next 15 miles. Scared me to death! I drove a few miles, he drove a few miles. I parked, he parked.... and eventually I married him!

On the first day after our first date, Jim sent me a dozen roses. Then I found out that he had a hobby. His hobby was collecting diamonds. Big ones! And he was looking for somebody to decorate. I volunteered! We dated for about two years and every Monday morning I received a long-stemmed red rose and a love note from him.

About three months before we were getting married, Jim said to me, "I have found the perfect place to go on a honeymoon. We will go to St. John's Island down in the Caribbean." I laughingly said, "I never would have thought of that!"

I did not confess the truth about my picture book until Jim and I had been married for almost a year. It was then that we were moving into our gorgeous new home and furnishing it with the elegant furniture that I had pictured. (Jim turned out to be the West Coast wholesale distributor for one of the finest eastern furniture manufacturers.)

By the way, the wedding was in Laguna Beach, California, and included the gown and tuxedo as realities. Eight months after I created my dream book, I became the vice president of human resources in the company where I worked.

In some sense this sounds like a fairy tale, but it is absolutely true. Jim and I have made many "picture books" since we have been married. God has filled our lives with the demonstration of these powerful principles of faith at work.

Decide what it is that you want in every area of your life. Imagine it vividly. Then act on your desires by actually constructing your personal goal book. Convert your ideas into concrete realities through this simple exercise. There are no impossible dreams. And, remember, God has promised to give His children the desires of their heart.

Glenna Salsbury

93. Appear in a Tarzan movie (He now considers this an irrelevant boyhood dream)
94. Own a horse, chimpanzee, cheetah, ocelot and coyote (Yet to own a chimp or cheetah)
95. Become a ham radio operator
96. Build own telescope
97. Write a book (On Nile trip)
98. Publish an article in National Geographic Magazine
99. High jump five feet
100. Broad jump 15 feet
101. Run a mile in five minutes
102. Weigh 175 pounds stripped (still does)
103. Perform 200 sit-ups and 20 pull-ups
104. Learn French, Spanish and Arabic
105. Study dragon legends on Komodo Island (Boa broke down within 20 miles of island)
106. Visit birthplace of Grandfather Sorenson in Denmark
107. Visit birthplace of Grandfather Goddard in England
108. Ship aboard a freighter as a seaman
109. Read the entire Encyclopedia Britannica (Has read extensive parts in each volume)
110. Read the Bible from cover to cover
111. Read the works of Shakespeare, Plato, Aristotle, Dickens, Thoreau, Poe, Rousseau, Bacon, Hemingway, Twain, Burroughs, Conrad, Talmage, Tolstoi, Longfellow, Keats, Whittier and Emerson (Not every work of each)
112. Become familiar with the compositions of Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, Ibert, Mendelssohn, Lalo, Rimski-Korsakov, Respighi, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, Toch, Tschaikovsky, Verdi
113. Become proficient in the use of a plane, motorcycle, tractor, surfboard, rifle, pistol, canoe, microscope, football basketball, bow and arrow, lariat and boomerang
114. Compose music
115. Play Clair de Lune on the piano
116. Watch fire-walking ceremony (In Bali and Surinam)
117. Milk a poisonous snake (Bitten by a diamond back during a photo session)
118. Light a match with a 22 rifle
119. Visit a movie studio

Look Out, Baby, I'm Your Love Man

It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared.

Whitney Young, Jr.

Les Brown and his twin brother were adopted by Mamie Brown, a kitchen worker and maid, shortly after their birth in a poverty-stricken Miami neighborhood.

Because of his hyperactivity and nonstop jabber, Les was placed in special education classes for the learning disabled in grade school and throughout high school. Upon graduation, he became a city sanitation worker in Miami Beach. But he had a dream of being a disc jockey. At night he would take a transistor radio to bed where he listened to the local jive-talking deejays. He created an imaginary radio station in his tiny room with its torn vinyl flooring, and a hairbrush served as his microphone as he practiced his patter, introducing records to his ghost listeners.

His mother and brother could hear him through the thin walls and would shout at him to quit flapping his jaws and go to sleep. But Les didn't listen to them. He was wrapped up in his own world, living a dream. One day Les boldly went to the local radio station during his lunch break from mowing grass for the city. He got into the station manager's office and told him he wanted to be a disc jockey.

The manager eyed this disheveled young man in overalls and a straw hat and inquired, "Do you have any background in broadcasting?"

Les replied, "No, sir, I don't."

"Well, son, I'm afraid we don't have a job for you then."

Les thanked him politely and left. The station manager assumed that he had seen the last of this young man. But he underestimated the depth of Les Brown's commitment to his goal. You see, Les had a higher purpose than simply wanting to be a disc jockey. He wanted to buy a nicer house for his adoptive mother, whom he loved deeply. The disc jockey job was merely a step toward his goal.

Mamie Brown had taught Les to pursue his dreams, so he felt sure that he would get a job at that radio station in spite of what the station manager had said.

Everybody Has A Dream

Some years ago I took on an assignment in a southern county to work with people on public welfare. What I wanted to do was show that everybody has the capacity to be self-sufficient and all we have to do is to activate them. I asked the county to pick a group of people who were on public welfare, people from different racial groups and different family constellations. I would then see them as a group for three hours every Friday. I also asked for a little petty cash to work with as I needed it.

The first thing I said after I shook hands with everybody was, "I would like to know what your dreams are." Everyone looked at me as if I were kind of wacky.

"Dreams? We don't have dreams."

I said, "Well, when you were a kid what happened? Wasn't there something you wanted to do?"

One woman said to me, "I don't know what you can do with dreams. The rats are eating up my kids."

"Oh," I said. "That's terrible. No, of course, you are very much involved with the rats and your kids. How can that be helped?"

"Well, I could use a new screen door because there are holes in my screen door."

I asked, "Is there anybody around here who knows how to fix a screen door?"

There was a man in the group, and he said, "A long time ago I used to do things like that but now I have a terribly bad back, but I'll try."

I told him I had some money if he would go to the store and buy some screening and go and fix the lady's screen door. "Do you think you can do that?"

"Yes, I'll try."

The next week, when the group was seated, I said to the woman, "Well, is your screen door fixed?"

"Oh, yes," she said.

"Then we can start dreaming, can't we?" She sort of smiled at me.

I said to the man who did the work, "How do you feel?"

He said, "Well, you know, it's a very funny thing. I'm beginning to feel a lot better."

Follow Your Dream

I have a friend named Monty Roberts who owns a horse ranch in San Ysidro. He has let me use his house to put on fund-raising events to raise money for youth at risk programs.

The last time I was there he introduced me by saying, "I want to tell you why I let Jack use my house. It all goes back to a story about a young man who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer who would go from stable to stable, race track to race track, farm to farm and ranch to ranch training horses. As a result, the boy's high school career was continually interrupted. When he was a senior, he was asked to write a paper about what he wanted to be and do when he grew up.

"That night he wrote a seven-page paper describing his goal of someday owning a horse ranch. He wrote about his dream in great detail and he even drew a diagram of a 200-acre ranch, showing the location of all the buildings, the stables and the track. He also drew a detailed floor plan for a 4,000-square-foot house that would sit on the 200-acre dream ranch.

"He put a great deal of his heart into the project and the next day he handed it in to his teacher. Two days later he received his paper back. On the front page was a large red F with a note that read, 'See me after class.'

"The boy with the dream went to see the teacher after class and asked, 'Why did I receive an F?'

'The teacher said, 'This is an unrealistic dream for a young boy like you. You have no money. You come from an itinerant family. You have no resources. Owning a horse ranch requires a lot of money. You have to buy the land. You have to pay for the original breeding stock and later you'll have to pay large stud fees. There's no way you could ever do it.' Then the teacher added, If you will rewrite this paper with a more realistic goal, I will reconsider your grade.'

The boy went home and thought about it long and hard. He asked his father what he should do. His father said, 'Look, son, you have to make up your own mind on this. However, I think it is a very important decision for you.'

Finally, after sitting with it for a week, the boy turned in the same paper, making no changes at all. He stated, 'You can keep the F and I'll keep my dream.'

Try Something Different

When we first read the following story, we had just begun teaching a course called "The Million Dollar Forum," a course designed to teach people to accelerate their income up to levels of a million dollars a year or more. Early on we discovered people get locked into a rut of trying harder without trying smarter. Trying harder doesn't always work. Sometimes we need to do something radically different to achieve greater levels of success. We need to break out of our paradigm prisons, our habit patterns and our comfort zones.

I'm sitting in a quiet room at the Milcroft Inn, a peaceful little place hidden back among the pine trees about an hour out of Toronto. It's just past noon, late July, and I'm listening to the desperate sounds of a life-or-death struggle going on a few feet away. There's a small fly burning out the last of its short life's energies in a futile attempt to fly through the glass of the windowpane. The whining wings tell the poignant story of the fly's strategy: Try harder.

But it's not working.

The frenzied effort offers no hope for survival. Ironically, the struggle is part of the trap. It is impossible for the fly to try hard enough to succeed at breaking through the glass. Nevertheless, this little insect has staked its life on reaching its goal through raw effort and determination.

This fly is doomed. It will die there on the windowsill.

Across the room, ten steps away, the door is open. Ten seconds of flying time and this small creature could reach the outside world it seeks. With only a fraction of the effort now being wasted, it could be free of this self-imposed trap. The breakthrough possibility is there. It would be so easy.

Why doesn't the fly try another approach, something dramatically different? How did it get so locked in on the idea that this particular route and determined effort offer the most promise for success? What logic is there in continuing until death to seek a breakthrough with more of the same?

No doubt this approach makes sense to the fly. Regrettably, it's an idea that will kill.

Abraham Lincoln Didn't Quit

The sense of obligation to continue is present in all of us. A duty to strive is the duty of us all. I felt a call to that duty.

Abraham Lincoln

Probably the greatest example of persistence is Abraham Lincoln. If you want to learn about somebody who didn't quit, look no further.

Born into poverty, Lincoln was faced with defeat throughout his life. He lost eight elections, twice failed in business and suffered a nervous breakdown.

He could have quit many times—but he didn't and because he didn't quit, he became one of the greatest presidents in the history of our country.

Lincoln was a champion and he never gave up. Here is a sketch of Lincoln's road to the White House.

1816 His family was forced out of their home. He had to work to support them. 1818 His mother died.

1831 Failed in business.

1832 Ran for state legislature—lost.

1832 Also lost his job—wanted to go to law school but couldn't get in.

1833 Borrowed some money from a friend to begin a business and by the end of the year he was bankrupt. He spent the next 17 years of his life paying off this debt.

1834 Ran for state legislature again—won.

1835 Was engaged to be married, sweetheart died and his heart was broken.

1836 Had a total nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.

1838 Sought to become speaker of the state legislature—defeated.

1840 Sought to become elector—defeated.

1843 Ran for Congress—lost.

1846 Ran for Congress again—this time he won—went to Washington and did a good job.

1848 Ran for re-election to Congress—lost.

1849 Sought the job of land officer in his home state—rejected.

1854 Ran for Senate of the United States—lost.

1856 Sought the Vice-Presidential nomination at his party's national convention—got less than 100 votes.

1858 Ran for U.S. Senate again—again he lost.

1860 Elected president of the United States.

The path was worn and slippery. My foot slipped from under me,
knocking the other out of the way, but I recovered and said to myself,
"It's a slip and not a fall."

Abraham Lincoln After losing a senate race

Source Unknown

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through. Then she spun around on the stool, stood up, looked back at the prescription counter and in a commanding voice that could be heard down the block, said, "Ruben Ahlman, come here!" The lady was Mrs. Ahlman!

She told Ruben to buy the advertising from me. His mouth turned up the other way in a big grin. Then she asked me for the names of the four merchants who had turned me down. She went to the phone and called each one. She gave me a hug and told me they were waiting for me and to go back and pick up their ads.

Ruben and Vivian Ahlman became our dear friends, as well as steady advertising customers. I learned that Ruben was a darling man who bought from everyone. He had promised Vivian not to buy any more advertising. He was just trying to keep his word to her. If I had only asked others in town, I might have learned that I should have been talking to Mrs. Ahlman from the beginning. That conversation on the stools of the soda fountain was the turning point. My advertising business prospered and grew into four offices, with 285 employees serving 4,000 continuous contract advertising accounts.

Later when Mr. Ahlman modernized the old drug store and removed the soda fountain, my sweet husband Bob bought it and installed it in my office. If you were here in California, we would sit on the soda fountain stools together. I'd pour you a cherry Coke and remind you to never give up, to remember that help is always closer than we know.

Then I would tell you that if you can't communicate with a key person, search for more information. Try another path around. Look for someone who can communicate for you in a third person endorsement. And, finally, I would serve you these sparkling, refreshing words of Bill Marriott of the Marriott Hotels:

Failure? I never encountered it.

All I ever met were temporary setbacks.

Dottie Walters

degree in public administration and continued flying, environmental activism and public speaking.

Mitchell's unshakable Positive Mental Attitude has earned him appearances on the "Today Show" and "Good Morning America" as well as feature articles in Parade, Time, The New York Times and other publications.

"Before I was paralyzed, there were 10,000 things I could do," Mitchell says. "Now there are 9,000. I can either dwell on the 1,000 I lost or focus on the 9,000 I have left. I tell people that I have had two big bumps in my life. If I have chosen not to use them as an excuse to quit, then maybe some of the experiences you are having which are pushing you back can be put into a new perspective. You can step back, take a wider view and have a chance to say, 'My life that isn't such a big deal after all.'"

Remember: "It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it."

Jack Canfield and Mark V. Hansen

Run, Patti, Run

At a young and tender age, Patti Wilson was told by her doctor that she was an epileptic. Her father, Jim Wilson, is a morning jogger. One day she smiled through her teenage braces and said, "Daddy what I'd really love to do is run with you every day, but I'm afraid I'll have a seizure." Her father told her, "If you do, I know how to handle it so let's start running!"

That's just what they did every day. It was a wonderful experience for them to share and there were no seizures at all while she was running. After a few weeks, she told her father, "Daddy, what I'd really love to do is break the world's long-distance running record for women." Her father checked the Guinness Book of World Records and found that the farthest any woman had run was 80 miles. As a freshman in high school, Patti announced, "I'm going to run from Orange County up to San Francisco." (A distance of 400 miles.) As a sophomore, "she went on, "I'm going to run to Portland, Oregon." (Over 1,500 miles.) "As a junior I'll run to St. Louis. (About 2,000 miles.) "As a senior I'll run to the White House." (More than 3,000 miles away.)

In view of her handicap, Patti was as ambitious as she was enthusiastic, but she said she looked at the handicap of being an epileptic as simply "an inconvenience." She focused not on what she had lost, but on what she had left.

That year she completed her run to San Francisco wearing a T-shirt that read, "I Love Epileptics." Her dad ran every mile at her side, and her mom, a nurse, followed in a motor home behind them in case anything went wrong.

In her sophomore year Patti's classmates got behind her. They built a giant poster that read, "Run, Patti, Run!" (This has since become her motto and the title of a book she has written.) On her second marathon, en route to Portland, she fractured a bone in her foot. A doctor told her she had to stop her run. He said, "I've got to put a cast on your ankle so that you don't sustain permanent damage."

"Doc, you don't understand," she said. "This isn't just a whim of mine, it's a magnificent obsession! I'm not just doing it for me, I'm doing it to break the chains on the brains that limit so many others. Isn't there a way I can keep running?" He gave her one option. He could wrap it in adhesive instead of putting it in a cast. He warned her that it would be

sat in a medieval dungeon, had my arm screwed up, had contracted worms and God knows what else. I wondered if my children, now older and changed so much, would accept me back into the family and what our reunion would be like. And I thought of Bea. Would I be okay for her? Did she still love me? Could she possibly know how much she had meant to me all these years?

The bus trip to the Hanoi airport was a blur, but one thing stood out with clarity for Coffee: The bright beautiful, red, white, and blue flag painted on the tail of the enormous Air Force C-141 transport that gleamed in the sun, awaiting the first load of freed prisoners.

Next to the aircraft were several dozen American military policemen who smiled at them through the fence and gave them the thumbs-up signal. As they lined up by twos, the Vietnam Base Officer reeled off their names, rank and service.

"Commander Gerald L. Coffee, United States Navy." (He had been promoted two ranks in his absence.)

As Coffee stepped forward, his attention was riveted on an American colonel wearing crisp Air Force blues, wings and ribbons. It was the first American military uniform he had seen in many years. The colonel returned Coffee's brisk salute.

"Commander Gerald L. Coffee reporting for duty, sir."

"Welcome back, Jerry." The colonel reached forward with both hands and shook Coffee's hand. When the plane was loaded, the pilot taxied directly onto the runway without holding short, then locked the brakes and jammed his throttles forward. The huge beast rocked and vibrated as the pilot made his final checks of the engine's performance. The roar was horrendous as the brakes were released and they lurched forward on the runway. When they were airborne, the pilot's voice came onto the speaker and filled the cabin. It was a strong, sure voice.

"Congratulations, gentlemen. We've just left North Vietnam." Only then did they erupt into cheers.

The first leg of their trip home took them to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. The crowd held up banners: "Welcome Home! We love you. God bless." From behind the security lines they applauded wildly as the name of each debarking POW was announced. There were television cameras, but the men had no idea that at that very moment in the small hours of the morning, millions of Americans back home were riveted to their television sets, cheering and weeping.

She Saved 219 Lives

Mrs. Betty Tisdale is a world-class heroine. When the war in Vietnam heated up back in April of 1975, she knew she had to save the 400 orphans who were about to be put on the streets. She had already adopted five orphaned Vietnamese girls with her former pediatrician husband, Col. Patrick Tisdale, who was a widower and already had five children.

As a U.S. Naval doctor in Vietnam in 1954, Tom Dooley had helped refugees flee from the communist north. Betty says, "I really feel Tom Dooley was a saint. His influence changed my life forever." Because of Dooley's book, she took her life savings and traveled to Vietnam 14 times on her vacations to visit and work in the hospitals and orphanages he had founded. While in Saigon, she fell in love with the orphans at An Lac (Happy Place), run by Madame Vu Thi Ngai, who was later evacuated by Betty the day Vietnam fell and returned with her to Georgia to live with Betty and her children.

When Betty, a do-it-now and invent-solutions-as-problems-arise kind of person, realized the 400 children's plight, she went into warp-speed action. She called Madame Ngai and said, "Yes! I'll come and get the children and get them all adopted." She didn't know how she would do it. She just knew that she'd do it. Later, in a movie of the evacuation, "The Children of An Lac," Shirley Jones portrayed Betty.

In moments she began to move mountains. She raised the necessary money in many different ways, even including accepting green stamps. She simply decided to do it and she did it. She said, "I visualized all those babies growing up in good Christian homes in America, not under communism." That kept her motivated.

She left for Vietnam from Fort Benning, Georgia, on Sunday, arrived on Tuesday in Saigon, and miraculously and sleeplessly conquered every obstacle to airlift 400 children out of Saigon by Saturday morning. However, upon her arrival, the head of Vietnam's social welfare, Dr. Dan, suddenly announced he would only approve children under ten years old and all the children must have birth certificates. She quickly discovered war orphans are fortunate to simply be alive. They don't have birth certificates.

Betty went to the hospital pediatric department, obtained 225 birth certificates, and quickly created birth dates, times and places for the 219 eligible babies, toddlers and youngsters. She says, "I have no idea when,

Are You Going To Help Me?

In 1989 an 8.2 earthquake almost flattened Armenia, killing over 30,000 people in less than four minutes.

In the midst of utter devastation and chaos, a father left his wife securely at home and rushed to the school where his son was supposed to be, only to discover that the building was as flat as a pancake.

After the traumatic initial shock, he remembered the promise he had made to his son: "No matter what, I'll always be there for you!" And tears began to fill his eyes. As he looked at the pile of debris that once was the school, it looked hopeless, but he kept remembering his commitment to his son.

He began to concentrate on where he walked his son to class at school each morning. Remembering his son's classroom would be in the back right corner of the building, he rushed there and started digging through the rubble.

As he was digging, other forlorn parents arrived, clutching their hearts, saying: "My son!" "My daughter!" Other well meaning parents tried to pull him off of what was left of the school saying:

"It's too late!"

"They're dead!"

"You can't help!"

"Go home!"

"Come on, face reality, there's nothing you can do!" "You're just going to make things worse!"

To each parent he responded with one line: "Are you going to help me now?" And then he proceeded to dig for his son, stone by stone.

The fire chief showed up and tried to pull him off of the school's debris saying "Fires are breaking out, explosions are happening everywhere.

You're in danger. We'll take care of it. Go home." To which this loving, caring Armenian father asked, "Are you going to help me now?"

The police came and said, "You're angry, distraught and it's over. You're endangering others. Go home. We'll handle it!" To which he replied,

"Are you going to help me now?" No one helped.

Courageously he proceeded alone because he needed to know for himself: "Is my boy alive or is he dead?"

He dug for eight hours ... 12 hours ... 24 hours ... 36 hours ... then, in the 38th hour, he pulled back a boulder and heard his son's voice. He

screamed his son's name, "ARMAND!" He heard back, "Dad!?! It's me, Dad! I told the other kids not to worry. I told 'em that if you were alive, you'd save me and when you saved me, they'd be saved. You promised, 'No matter what, I'll always be there for you!' You did it, Dad!"

"What's going on in there? How is it?" the father asked.

"There are 14 of us left out of 33, Dad. We're scared, hungry, thirsty and thankful you're here. When the building collapsed, it made a wedge, like a triangle, and it saved us."

"Come on out, boy!"

"No, Dad! Let the other kids out first, 'cause I know you'll get me! No matter what, I know you'll be there for me!"

Mark V. Hansen

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reacted to her ruining her jeans. I offered a compromise: "From now on you can wear anything you want to school and with your friends, and I won't bug you about it."

"That'll be a relief."

"But when I take you out with me to church or shopping or to my friends, I'd like you to dress in something you know I like without my having to say a word."

She thought about it.

Then I added, "That means you get 95 percent your way and I get 5 percent for me. What do you think?"

She got a twinkle in her eye as she put out her hand and shook mine.

"Mother, you've got yourself a deal!"

From then on I gave her a happy farewell in the morning and didn't bug her about her clothes. When I took her out with me, she dressed properly without fussing. We had ourselves a deal.

Florence Littauer

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Two Monks

Two monks on a pilgrimage came to the ford of a river. There they saw a girl dressed in all her finery, obviously not knowing what to do since the river was high and she did not want to spoil her clothes. Without more ado, one of the monks took her on his back, carried her across and put her down on dry ground on the other side.

Then the monks continued on their way. But the other monk after an hour started complaining, "Surely it is not right to touch a woman; it is against the commandments to have close contact with women. How could you go against the rules of monks?"

The monk who had carried the girl walked along silently, but finally he remarked, "I set her down by the river an hour ago, why are you still carrying her?"

Irmgard Schlegel

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Sachi

Soon after her brother was born, little Sachi began to ask her parents to leave her alone with the new baby. They worried that like most four-year-olds, she might feel jealous and want to hit or shake him, so they said no. But she showed no signs of jealousy. She treated the baby with kindness and her pleas to be left alone with him became more urgent. They decided to allow it.

Elated, she went into the baby's room and shut the door, but it opened a crack—enough for her curious parents to peek in and listen. They saw little Sachi walk quietly up to her baby brother, put her face close to his and say quietly, "Baby, tell me what God feels like. I'm starting to forget."

Dan Millman

More Chicken Soup?

Many of the stories and poems you have read in this book were submitted by readers like you. We are planning to publish five or six Chicken Soup For The Soul books every year. We invite you to contribute a story.

Stories may be up to 1,200 words and must uplift or inspire. You may submit an original piece or something you clip out of a local newspaper, a magazine, a church bulletin or a company newsletter. It could also be your favorite quotation that you've put on your refrigerator door or a personal experience that has touched you deeply.

In addition to future Servings of Chicken Soup For The Soul, some of the other books we have planned are Chicken Soup For The Woman's Soul as well as Chicken Soup For The . . . Teacher's Soul, Jewish Soul, Pet Lover's Soul, Kids Soul, Country Soul, Laughing Soul, Grieving Soul, Unsinkable Soul, Divorced Soul and Loving Couple's Soul. Just send a copy of your stories and other pieces, indicating which edition they are for, to the following address:

Chicken Soup For The (Specify Which Edition) Soul

P.O. Box 30880

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Tel: 805-563-2935

Fax: 805-563-2945

Web site: <http://www.chickensoup.com>

You can also visit our Chicken Soup For The Soul site on AOL at keyword: chickensoup.

We will be sure that both you and the author are credited for your submission.

For information about speaking engagements, other books, audiotapes, workshops and training programs contact any of the authors directly.

Who Is Jack Canfield?

Jack Canfield is one of America's leading experts in the development of human potential and personal effectiveness. He is both a dynamic, entertaining speaker and a highly sought-after trainer. Jack has a wonderful ability to inform and inspire audiences toward increased levels of self-esteem and peak performance.

He is the author and narrator of several bestselling audio- and videocassette programs, including Self-Esteem And Peak Performance,