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# YOU CAN TRIUMPH

A Series of Six Lessons Devoted to:

- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| I. TRIUMPH OVER ANXIETY     | IV. TRIUMPH OVER GUILT     |
| II. TRIUMPH OVER FATIGUE    | V. TRIUMPH OVER LONELINESS |
| III. TRIUMPH OVER SELF-PITY | VI. TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY   |



## LESSON III

Mayan Revelation Number 289

### TRIUMPH OVER SELF-PITY

Get Your Life Into Focus

Form the Habit of Being Optimistic

Plunge Into Constructive Action

You Were Created for a Purpose

Beloved Perfectionist:

At some time in our lives most of us are prone to indulge in self-pity. We suffer business reverses, or fail to receive the promotion that we expected, and are tempted to believe that we are victims of someone's errors or prejudice. We are crippled by illness, or by an accident, and are inclined to dwell upon our misfortune. Death takes a member of our family, and we may feel that our loneliness is so great that our family and friends should cater to our wishes.

This Lesson on TRIUMPH OVER SELF-PITY outlines the attitudes and the efforts that enable a person to wipe out thoughts that would magnify his misfortune and encourage him to continually ask for sympathy. While in an hour of illness, grief, or disaster, we need consolation from those about us, it is unhealthy for

us to continue to demand this for weeks, or months, or years. When we face discouragement, we can carry on valiantly if we find meaning in the circumstances that confront us.

Even when our world seems to have tumbled in, new responsibilities lie ahead. Daily we must seek the wisdom and the courage to discover purpose and satisfaction in doing what we are able to do, whether this is much or little.

George Bernard Shaw, in the Preface to "Man and Superman", declares: "This is the true joy of life: The being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap-heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

While these are not exactly the words that would be chosen by a man of Faith - for we believe God has no "scrap-heap", but heaven waiting for us - Shaw does eloquently voice the attitude that we should maintain if we are to find true joy and satisfaction in our daily lives. We must see a purpose in the work that is ours, no matter how simple or routine our tasks may be. We must pour out our strength for the challenge that is before us - never stinting or counting the cost. We must see ourselves as part of the mighty creative force of the universe, not indulging in the idea that we are entitled to comfort and ease.

Whenever we succeed in holding fast to the belief that our work is important, and we summon all our resources so we can do it well, we have no room for thoughts of self-pity. If we attempt to maintain courage while trusting in our own strength alone, we soon falter. It is easy for us to feel sorry for ourselves when illness strikes, or our work is dull, or the demands upon us seem unreasonable. To walk steadily over the rough places, we need the support of God's Hand. But we should not faint by the wayside, for we have the assurance that the Almighty is always with us - ready to guide and strengthen us. As we approach this Lesson, let us turn to Him in prayer:

#### PRAYER

Dear Father, Help us to remember that Thou hast not promised to protect us from trouble, but to guide and sustain us through every form of adversity. Save us from despair. Make us sensitive to Thy Presence and willing to follow Thy leading. Open our eyes so we can clearly see the problems we face, neither magnifying their importance nor underestimating our ability to cope with them. Increase our courage and our self-confidence. Reveal to us Thy will for our lives and Thy unfailing power. In the Master's name we pray. Amen.

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#### GET YOUR LIFE INTO FOCUS

Do you remember going into a "Hall of Mirrors" where you saw yourself first as too tall, and then as too stout? Or looking into a glass that doubled the

size of your features so every blemish stood out in glaring detail?

A distorted view of a person's face or figure is not flattering. One that magnifies our imperfections brings discouragement, so it is comforting to look once again into a mirror that gives an accurate likeness of ourselves.

It is important for you to learn to see your life in proper focus. Recognize your weaknesses, but do not magnify them. Evaluate the factors in your situation and the resources that you have at your command.

Many people are confused and downhearted because they have lost a true sense of the opportunities that are before them. They see all their future as under a shadow. They refuse to believe that the clouds will lift, revealing hidden beauty. They ignore the fact that they have at their disposal divine resources that they can tap.

Since the beginning of time, men have had to battle against great odds. Those who have found peace and satisfaction were not merely those who had luxury and ease, but more often those who bravely endured hunger, war and privation. The men and women who were victorious in their struggle with life were those who saw the Truth and kept their lives in focus.

When you are inclined to feel sorry for yourself, it is well to turn to the biographies of those who suffered severe handicaps, yet lived triumphantly. Grief summoned Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Marshall to wider avenues of service than they had known before. Sir Walter Scott ignored his crippled leg, until others - inspired by his conversation, or by his works - forgot that he was lame. But Lord Byron allowed a similar affliction to poison his whole existence, so that in most of his writing we see the reflection of a scowling brow and a curling lip. Byron passed judgment upon himself, as well as upon all who indulge in self-pity, when he wrote:

"This should have been a noble creature; he  
Hath all the energy which would have made  
A goodly frame of glorious elements,  
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,  
It is awful chaos."

Avoid such personal disaster by learning to distinguish between those values that are of primary worth, and those that are of only secondary importance. Vigorous health is desirable, but not as essential for happiness as peace of mind. Prestige brings some rewards, but far less enduring satisfactions than the realization that we have rendered real service. Money is needed to satisfy our basic requirements, but friendship and love are also essential for our well-being.

Strive to see what is of utmost importance and to put first things first. If you lose your position, or your health, or the one who is dearest to you, don't indulge in self-pity. Bend every effort to see what you can accomplish in the days ahead. Rouse your will to force yourself to do the best you can with what you have left.

The following rules will help you to keep your life in focus:

1. Desire self-respect more than pity.

2. Look to the future more than to the past.
3. Set reasonable goals, rather than attempting the impossible.
4. Accept the help of your family and friends, but also seek Divine Aid.
5. Do one thing that is constructive, rather than bemoaning all the things you are unable to do.
6. Keep your mind fixed upon eternal values, rather than upon temporary obstacles.



### FORM THE HABIT OF BEING OPTIMISTIC

Whenever you are trying to make sound decisions and to approach your problem constructively, you are not inclined to indulge in self-pity. Concentration upon those things you are able to do leads to optimism. Clear and creative thinking is a habit you can form.

In every set-back you face, summon all your intelligence as you seek to analyze your situation. Keep before your eyes the measures you should take in order to establish new purposes and assets. Resolutely hope for and expect the best!

Physical strength comes from nourishment and exercise. Muscles not used shrivel up. Mental strength comes from exercising the mind. Your ability to form sound judgments is augmented as you make one intelligent decision after another. Your skill in discerning life's true values increases as you refuse to sigh and beg for sympathy, but courageously take a step toward mastering whatever problem is before you.

Remember that even when you are looking on the sunny side of life, there is still more good fortune beyond the range of your vision. The days ahead will bring joys you cannot now foresee.

Life is like a tapestry, which is being woven of many colors, some bright and some dark. If you were to look at the underside of the tapestry, you would find the threads are knotted, the picture is blurred. When it is only partially finished, the figures appear broken, the beauty is incomplete. Day by day the weaver follows the instructions for the section on which he is working, often oblivious of the designer's total concept. But when the craftsman has completed his work, the fabric is unrolled to reveal the pattern planned by the artist.

So it is with our days. The dark threads of pain and disappointment are supplied along with the bright strands of joy. We need to take them as they come and weave them together as God directs. We should not waste a single opportunity for joy and ecstasy; but whenever pain and disappointment come to us, we should strive to use those, also - letting personal hardships make us more patient, and kind, and sympathetic.

If you succeed in remaining calm and cheerful whenever small troubles enter your life, you will form thought-habits to enable you to be brave and serene when great waves of adversity sweep over you. So make a sincere effort to daily maintain a spirit of optimism, courage, and trust. This will counteract the tendency toward self-pity.



### PLUNGE INTO CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION

If self-pity starts to creep into your mind, it is of utmost importance that you make a concerted effort to turn your thoughts toward work you can accomplish, instead of dwelling upon your frustration, weakness, or loss. Summon your will and force yourself to do something constructive.

A senior, who had been ill, failed his examinations and was not able to graduate with his class. In a state of disappointment and confusion, he went to the school counselor and asked, "What do I do now?"

"Register for the next semester", was the emphatic reply.

The advice to push forward in constructive action is as wholesome for anyone who has failed, or has met disappointment, as it was for that student. Success in your vocation may require several adjustments. Sometimes when things go wrong you must begin again, making a different approach, or working with greater intensity. Sometimes it is necessary to find a new occupation.

This applies to the efforts of a housewife, as well as to those of a businessman. It applies to one whose activity has become limited because of illness, as well as to one whose sales have been curtailed by cut-throat competition. It applies to the man or woman who is doing volunteer work, as well as to the person who receives financial compensation for his work.

Realize that no more is required of you than what you are able to do. There are many avenues of service. When one is closed to you, another will open if you seek it.

Accept this Truth and you will be spared much unhappiness. You will find that you can accept reverses gracefully when you pour all your energy into new channels of endeavor.

The conviction that failure can act as a teacher has contributed to the amazing advances in medicine, science, and engineering. When an experiment brings negative results, men do not say, "The problem cannot be solved." No, they declare: "This eliminates one possibility. Let us explore the next."

When the research worker finds that one antibiotic will not destroy a virus he runs cultures on another. When an industrial designer learns that a plane crashed because the wing covering was too fragile, he seeks a more durable material.

We need the faith and the persistence that makes these men tireless in

their pursuit of knowledge. Adversity can spur us, also, to seek for fresh insight and to summon our reserves of patience.

This calls for the strict discipline of our thinking, as well as the willingness to perform an endless round of chores that may be uninteresting and monotonous. Peace of mind can be gained if we will

push aside regrets

seek for tasks we are able to accomplish

make our approach with eagerness

sustain our efforts, even when we cannot measure the progress we are making.

An author who had undergone major surgery tells of his battle with self-pity. He said, "For several weeks after my operation I was nervous and weak. I became frustrated as I discovered that it took great effort to do things that once I had done easily. I began to feel sorry for myself and I was inclined to let people wait upon me, rather than forcing myself to struggle to accomplish a trifling task. Although my family and friends were very patient with me, I became more and more discouraged.

"In desperation I turned to God for help. At first I begged and begged for strength, but it came only fitfully and my progress was slow.

"The change in my life came when I gave up measuring my usefulness by what I could do in the past. I ceased to pity myself and became reconciled to certain limitations. No longer did I frantically pray for recovery. I asked only for the peace and the Presence of God. My prayer was answered. From that time on, I was a new person. When I ceased to feel sorry for myself, I found the strength to begin writing again. At first I could work for only a few minutes at a time, but as I wrote, my endurance gradually increased. I am convinced that part of my healing came through the labor itself and that no one who has been ill or discouraged should neglect the therapy of work."

This testimony has been included in full for it has a message for anyone who is in danger of becoming a victim of self-pity. The account highlights five principles you will want to apply whenever you seek to reestablish confidence in yourself:

1. Don't use past attainments as the measuring rod for your present usefulness.
2. Pray for God's Presence and Power, leaving the degree and rate of your healing in His Hands.
3. Courageously begin whatever work you desire to do.
4. Be patient if you are able to accomplish only a little at first.
5. Do as much as you can today and you will be able to do more tomorrow.

Always remember that your success in life does not depend upon spectacular achievements, but upon mastering yourself. One thing is important - that you use ALL the talents you possess. During part of your life, this will involve one set of skills; and then you may come to a time when these can no longer be used. If you find this is so, discover other talents that you possess.

God grants many gifts to each of us. We are called to find our maximum usefulness within the limitations that are ours. Sometimes we can serve by our physical labor; sometimes by our spiritual guidance. Sometimes we can lend a helping hand; sometimes we can offer a listening ear and a sympathetic word. Our own troubles shrink in size whenever we strive to assist someone else - whether we give material aid or emotional support.

Keep in your mind the Truth that when one avenue of service is closed to you, you must seek for another. Overcome regrets by constructive endeavor. This is essential if you are to triumph over self-pity.



#### YOU WERE CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

You were created for a purpose. This can be achieved not in some climactic moment, but by what you do hour by hour, and day by day.

Would an unbiased evaluation of your efforts reveal the fact that you are living up to your maximum capacity? In hours of adversity do you have faith that God still has work for you to accomplish? Or do you waste your time making useless complaints, blaming fate for your handicaps, burning up your strength with regrets and forebodings?

Biologists tell us that in all nature, growth depends upon the response of the organism to stimulus. Never allow self-pity to dull your sensitivity to the impulse to create and to achieve, for then you would become stunted.

Don't underestimate your potential. If your financial resources shrink, you can use the power of your mind to either recover your losses, or to find happiness on a simpler scale of living. If pleasures that you formerly enjoyed become prohibitive in price, you can discover substitutes that are no less satisfying. Plan those activities that will bring joy to yourself and to others. You will find that when your attention is centered upon a purpose, destructive thoughts are crowded out of your mind.

Your mission in life is not complete until you step from this world into the next. As long as you live, use every resource at your command to cope with the challenge before you. When changes come, look to the future and fill it with usefulness. When your children no longer need the guidance and care you once gave them, don't try to dominate their lives, but pour your energy into other channels - yet be ready to lend a hand to any member of your family who asks for your assistance. When grief or failing health force you to make drastic readjustments in your way of living, substitute new interests for the familiar ones. Refuse



to limp along, burdened with a load of self-pity. Invest all the talents you possess.

Pour yourself wholeheartedly into what you are striving to achieve. If today's tasks seem of little value, remember that great good can be accomplished in very small ways. If the responsibilities upon your shoulders are heavy, do not complain, but ask God to show you how to adjust the load so you are not worn out by friction.

There may be a period in your life when you are inclined to doubt your own worth. Some may sometimes think they have nothing of value to offer. Young people may get the idea that because they lack experience their services are not wanted. Men and women who are older frequently are tormented by the thought that the world would be as well off without them. This thought may come in a period of ill health, or of remorse for self-indulgence.

If you ever feel that you have fallen in your own esteem, make an effort to visualize the person whom God intends you to be. Once you have reestablished your image of the fine man or woman you should become, determine that your every word and deed shall be in line with what that person would do. Dedicate your life to a purpose worthy of your noblest self. Listen to God's call for you, and fulfill the destiny for which you were born.

Whenever you respond to the challenge to live at your best, you receive a glorious reward. This may come in the form of spontaneous satisfaction. It may come in the awareness that you are cooperating with your Creator.

Whatever your means of livelihood, or whatever voluntary service you render, work with integrity and with a gay heart. Your age, and strength, and your natural gifts will determine the ways by which you will respond to God's call, but never shirk what you know is your duty. The knowledge that you are being true to the insight you have, that you are being used for the purpose for which you were created, will bring you the true joy of life, whether your labor involves dramatic endeavor or routine chores.

"Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to His Plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good." -- (Romans 8:28)

Phillips Translation

Remember: It is not a disgrace to feel that your condition warrants sympathy, but this is no reason to allow yourself to be caught in the grip of self-pity. You never gain in strength by avoiding hardship, but by struggling through it. You grow in spiritual power not by being free of any inclination to pamper yourself, but by heroically summoning all your intelligence and your will-power to rise above discouragement and self-indulgence.

You can live triumphantly as you learn that happiness does not depend upon your circumstances, but upon yourself. God has given you inner resources with which you can combat disappointment, illness, and grief. The more trying your situation, the more urgent it is that you have the vision to see what good can come out of it, and the courage to use all your intelligence and spiritual power to wrest something of eternal value from your tasks.

Do this by:

Getting your life into focus

Forming the habit of being optimistic

Plunging into constructive action

Being aware that you were created for a purpose.

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AFFIRMATION

I have important work to do. I will become so absorbed in the challenge before me that there will be no room in my mind for self-pity.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.