

# The Inspirational Stories

*An Amazing Collection  
of Intelligence Tales that  
Motivate and Enlighten The Soul*

Johnny S

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## Foreword

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on grabbing a copy of The Inspirational Stories. I believe it would make a big chance in your life.

This volume features a selection of the world's most inspiring stories to move the body and soul. I want to inspire and motivate you with these tales of courage and bravery so that you can have a breakthrough in your own struggles, no matter where you are.

Featured in this massive book are tales of people overcoming extraordinary hardship and achieving breakthroughs in their lives. Their strength and courage serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for us all.

Enjoy reading...

To your Success,

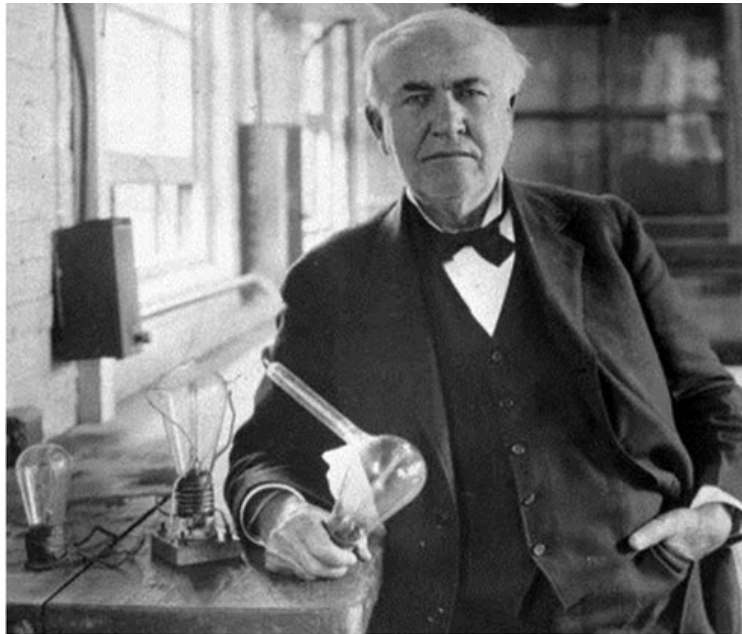
*Johnny S*

## Chapter 1:

### *Success Stories of Great People and Inspiring Leaders*

#### **Thomas Alva Edison**

Thomas Alva Edison is one of America's most famous inventors. Edison saw huge change take place in his lifetime. He was responsible for making many of those changes occur. His inventions created and contributed to modern night lights, movies, telephones, records and CDs. Edison was truly a genius.



Edison is most famous for his development of the first electric light bulb. When Edison was born, electricity had not been developed. By the time he died, entire cities were lit by electricity. Much of the credit for electricity goes to Edison.

Some of his inventions were improvements on other inventions, like the telephone. Some of his inventions he deliberately tried to invent, like the light bulb and the movie projector. But some inventions he stumbled upon, like the phonograph. Of all his inventions, Edison was most proud of the phonograph.

Edison invented and improved upon things that transformed our world. Some things he invented by himself. Some things he invented with other people. Just about all his inventions are things we still use in some form today. Throughout his life, Edison tried to invent things that everyone could use.

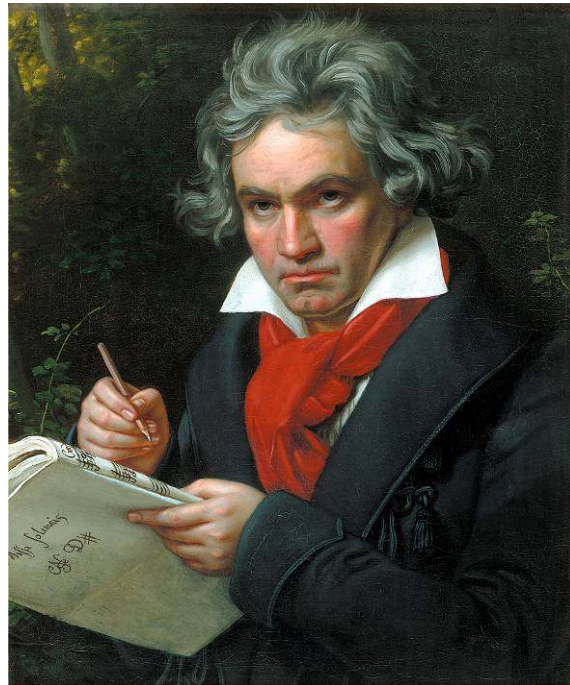
Edison created the world's first "invention factory". He and his partners invented, built and shipped the product - all in the same complex. This was a new way to do business. Today many businesses have copied Edison's invention factory design.

A business friend once asked Edison about the secret to his success. Edison replied, "Genius is hard work, stick-to-itiveness, and common sense". But his "common sense" was very uncommon. More patents were issued to Edison than have been issued to any other single person in U.S. history: 1,093.

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## Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven was born on 16th, December, 1770 in Bonn of Germany. His father was a singer in local palace choir. Beethoven's father was a very common person and he was addicted to gambling. However, his mother was a fairly kind-hearted and gentle female. She married an assistant as her first marriage and married to Beethoven's father when her ex-husband died.



Beethoven didn't have access to go to school for the reason that his family was very poor. Nevertheless, he had a special feeling of music when he was very young. His father wanted to make use of his potential to make a big fortune. As a result, Beethoven had to practice playing clavicorn and violin day and night under his father's pressure.



Beethoven had a performance on a stage for the first time when he was only seven years old and he made a huge success. Some famous musicians considered him as the second Mozart. Beethoven learned how to compose music from Nifo and published his first work named Concerto in A minor when he was 11. He went to Vienna to learn how to compose music from Mozart and Haydn.

It seems that he would have a fairly bright future when Beethoven received the first success in 1800. Nevertheless, he was troubled with a terrible matter for years at that time. He found that he has become a deaf person. There couldn't be anything more terrible than that for a musician. He sank into a blue mood for a long time as a consequence.

Beethoven has an enthusiastic heart all the time. But his enthusiasm was often unfortunate. He often tolerated both hope and enthusiasm, disappointment and resistance. There was no doubt that all of these emotions had become his unique source of creation. He fell in love with Julia in 1801 and composed a music named Moonlight for her specifically. To his disappointed, she couldn't understand his noble soul and refused him. Beethoven was upset and despairing for that. It was the most hopeless moment for him and once a time, he wrote down a paper of posthumous papers.

He came to life in 1803 and composed some bright and warm music such as The Second Symphonies. From then on, several more beautiful and marvelous music were produced. Some of them are fairly famous and I think you must have heard about them such as The Eroica and The Storm.

Beethoven finished his masterpiece named The Ninth Symphonies in 1823. This piece of work expressed his world in his dream.

He suffered from pulmonary edema in Dec.1826, which was resulted from a bad influenza. He passed away on 26th, March, 1827 for the reason of suffering from hepatopathy.

It is said that the day on which Beethoven died was raining heavily and storming seriously. It seems that even the God grieved over his death.

Beethoven's funeral was fairly solemn and grand. It is estimated that over 20 thousand people presented his funeral.

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## **Mother Teresa**



This great personality was born in Albania. Right from the age of 18, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, popularly known as mother Teresa, was into spirituality. It was in the year 1931, when this young girl with a golden heart, acquired the name Teresa from the French nun Thérèse Martin. In 1937, she took vows and began teaching in Saint Mary's High School in Calcutta.

In 1948, she got another opportunity from God to serve the society. The same year, mother Teresa was relieved by Pope Pious XII from her services and she was granted the status of an independent nun. And thereafter, she got engrossed with the task of serving the poor and sick people of Calcutta. The coming years witnessed the setting up of a charity organization called the Missionaries of Charity. In 1950, her source of concern was the care of lepers, the people discarded by society.

Missionary of Charity opened its branches in almost every country to assist the poor, elderly, blind and people suffering from deadly disease like AIDS. For the bright future of children, she opened up schools. In 1979, she was awarded with Nobel Prize for the services that she had rendered to the society. But the journey of this great messiah on earth ended in August 1997, when she made her way towards the heaven.

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## **Bill Gates**

Bill Gates was born on October 28, 1955 in a family having rich business, political and community service background. His great-grandfather was a state legislator and a mayor, his grandfather was vice president of national bank and his father was a lawyer.



Bill strongly believes in hard work. He believes that if you are intelligent and know how to apply your intelligence, you can achieve anything. From childhood Bill was ambitious, intelligent and competitive. These qualities helped him to attain top position in the profession he chose. In school, he had an excellent record in mathematics and science. Still he was getting very bored in school and his parents knew it, so they always tried to feed him with more information to keep him busy. Bill's parents came to know their son's intelligence and decided to enroll him in a private school, known for its intense academic environment. It was a very important decision in Bill Gate's life where he was first introduced to a computer. Bill Gates and his

friends were very much interested in computer and formed "Programmers Group" in late 1968. Being in this group, they found a new way to apply their computer skill in university of Washington. In the next year, they got their first opportunity in Information Sciences Inc. in which they were selected as programmers. ISI (Information Sciences Inc.) agreed to give them royalties whenever it made money from any of the group's program. As a result of the business deal signed with Information Sciences Inc., the group also became a legal business.

Bill Gates and his close friend Allen started new company of their own, Traf-O-Data. They developed a small computer to measure traffic flow. From this project they earned around \$20,000. The era of Traf-O-Data came to an end when Gates left the college. In 1973, he left home for Harvard University. He didn't know what to do, so he enrolled his name for pre-law. He took the standard freshman courses with the exception of signing up for one of Harvard's toughest mathematics courses. He did well over there, but he couldn't find it interesting too. He spent many long nights in front of the school's computer and the next day asleep in class. After leaving school, he almost lost himself from the world of computers. Gates and his friend Paul Allen remained in close contact even though they were away from school. They would often discuss new ideas for future projects and the possibility of starting a business one fine day. At the end of Bill's first year, Allen came close to him so that they could follow some of their ideas. That summer they got job in Honeywell. Allen kept on pushing Bill for opening a new software company.

Within a year, Bill Gates dropped out from Harvard. Then he formed Microsoft. Microsoft's vision is "A computer on every desk and Microsoft software on every computer". Bill is a visionary person and works very hard to achieve his vision. His belief in high intelligence and hard work has put him where he is today. He does not believe in mere luck or God's grace, but just hard work and competitiveness. Bill's Microsoft is good competition for other software companies and he will continue to stomp out the competition until he dies. He likes to play the game of Risk and the game of world domination. His beliefs are so powerful, which have helped him increase his wealth and his monopoly in the industry.

Bill Gates is not a greedy person. In fact, he is quite giving person when it comes to computers, internet and any kind of funding. Some years back, he visited Chicago's Einstein Elementary School and announced grants benefiting Chicago's schools and museums where he donated a total of \$110,000, a bunch of computers, and provided internet connectivity to number of schools. Secondly, Bill Gates donated 38 million dollars for the building of a computer institute at Stanford University. Gates plans to give away 95% of all his earnings when he is old and gray.

Bill Gates from this story may seem a superhero and do it alone guy but in reality, he is not. He was able to achieve it because of the kind of people that he choose to mingle with.

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## Chapter 2:

### *Overcoming Adversity*

#### **Oprah Winfrey**

No one ever blames Oprah Winfrey for taking some easy way out. Although her childhood was full of toil, this young girl from Kosciusko, Mississippi always believed she was destined to be someone great.



Maybe it was from her life background in a village that she learned “to turn misery into wisdom” as she stated later. And her misery was not just a few. She was born as she resulted of a free intercourse between her mother and a service man who then left her. First Oprah was brought up by her grandmother in a pig farm with no running water facility. She then lived with her mother who moved to Milwaukee where she was sexually abused



for the first time by a friend of her family and her own relative. Oprah grew up into a rebellious teenager, at 14 years old she lived in a bad surroundings and gave birth to a male baby that died a week later. Loosing her patience, Oprah's mother sent her to live with her father – a man she never knew before.

But it was by living with her father that she eventually got the discipline she needed to turn her outstanding intelligence into its right track. She was doing well at school and was known for her smart talking. She joined a local beauty contest and won a scholarship in Tennessee State University. She began to study broadcast communication and got a part time job as a reporter in Nashville TV station.

Suddenly it looked like nothing could ever stop the strides of this young girl she once was a naughty girl. Oprah left school at the age as young as 19 years old to become the first Afro-American woman broadcaster in Nashville. She wrestled with this job for three years before she took another job in Baltimore Broadcasting Station – where there were larger market segment and greater prestige and challenge as well. This step later proved to be the biggest blessing in disguise mistake Oprah had made.

Oprah was usually calm and self controlled in her previous job, but now she looked so exhausted. She forgot to read the text copy prior to her appearance before the camera. She misspelled “blasé” and misplaced Barbados to be somewhere in California and made a small laugh at that incident. She interviewed a fire victim with such style as asking “How did you feel after

the ordeal?” then wept in front of the camera and apologized for exploiting woman’s emotion.

The station management did not appreciate her attitude in front of the camera and they didn’t like her appearance either. They complained about her hair style, her big nose and the distance between her eyes. Tempted to glamorize her appearance, they sent her to a good salon in New York which did a disastrous remodeling that made her hair fall off. Failing to find a suitable wig, she managed to appear on the camera (then she said: “You will learn a lot about yourself if you are baldheaded, a black and a news broadcaster in Baltimore”)

In one year her glory was to be unpredictably coming. The station had had enough of this new figure. They decided she just didn’t fit to TV news broadcasting job. But to avoid breaking her contract, they choose not to fire her but lowered her position from broadcaster to presenter of a talk show for housewives called “People Are Talking” run at daytime.

Oprah said, “Failure is the way God chooses to remind you that you are on the wrong track”. But clearly she is now on the right track about her first day on the talk show “it is like a breath of relief, and it is exactly what you must feel”. The show was a prime show and most of the audiences were women who found themselves reflected in the figure of that simple, direct, funny and human presenter.

Seven years later, Oprah’s show attracted a station in Chicago and she was offered to move there to direct the A. M. Chicago show. In a month, she

made that show the most loveable show. In 1985 the show was further developed and given a new name: The Oprah Winfrey Show and is now nationally broadcasted.

During more than 15 years of unpredicted success, Oprah keep sharing many things, including her own struggle and success affairs: going on a diet against too much food and fat (she eventually got her ideal weight), a law suit by a ranch owner (which she won), the “TV Garbage” program which dominates her market segment (she soared up and achieved highest rating). Even after all she had been through, she refused to see her failures as mistakes. “I don’t believe in failure” Oprah said. “It is not a failure if you enjoy the process”.

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## **An Old Mule Story**

Once upon a time, a farmer owned an old mule that tripped and fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule braying and was unable to figure out how to bring up the old animal. It grieved him that he could not pull the animal out. He'd been a good worker around the farm. Although the farmer sympathized with the mule, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened. He had them help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and quietly put him out of his misery.



At first, the old mule was puzzled, but as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back, he had a thought: he ought to shake off the dirt and step up. And he did just that.

"Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up." Even though he took painful blows of dirt and fought panic, he just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up!

It wasn't long before the old mule stepped up and over the lip of that well. What could have buried him actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

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## Potatoes, Eggs, and Coffee Beans

Once upon a time, a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed.

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot, and ground coffee beans in the third pot. He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter.



The daughter moaned and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. After twenty minutes, he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup.

Turning to her, he asked, "Daughter, what do you see?"

"Potatoes, eggs, and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer", he said, "and touched the potatoes". She did and noted that they were soft.

He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.

Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

"Father, what does this mean?" she asked.

He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs, and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity, the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently.

The potato went in strong, hard and unrelenting, but in boiling water it became soft and weak. The egg was fragile with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the inside of the egg became hard.

However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

"Which are you?" he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

In life, things happen around us and things happen to us, but the only thing that truly matters is what happens within us.

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## **Don't Quit**

When things go wrong as they sometimes will  
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill.  
When funds are low and the debts are high.  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh.  
When care is pressing you down a bit.  
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.  
Life is queer with its twists and turns.  
As everyone of us sometimes learns.  
And many a failure turns about  
When he might have won had he stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow -  
You may succeed with another blow.  
Success is failure turned inside out -  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt.  
And you never can tell how close you are.  
It may be near when it seems so far:  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit  
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

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People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.

**LOVE THEM ANYWAY.**

If you do good, people accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

**DO GOOD ANYWAY.**

If you are successful, you win false and true enemies.

**SUCCEED ANYWAY.**

The good you do will be forgotten tomorrow.

**DO GOOD ANYWAY.**

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

**BE HONEST AND FRANK ANYWAY.**

What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight.

**BUILD ANYWAY.**

People really need help but may attack you if you help them.

**HELP PEOPLE ANYWAY.**

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

**GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU'VE GOT ANYWAY.**

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## **He Got the Job**

An elderly couple retired to the countryside to a small isolated cottage overlooking some rugged and rocky heathland.

One early morning, the woman saw from her window a young man dressed in working clothes walking on the heath about a hundred yards away. He was carrying a spade and a small case and he disappeared from view behind a copse of trees.

The woman thought no more about it but around the same time the next day she saw the man again, carrying his spade and a small case, and again he disappeared behind the copse.

The woman mentioned this to her husband who said he was probably a farmer or gamekeeper setting traps, or performing some other country practice that would be perfectly normal, and so not to worry. However, after several more sightings of the young man with the spade over the next two weeks, the woman persuaded her husband to take a stroll - early, before the man tended to arrive - to the copse of trees to investigate what he was doing.

There they found a surprisingly long and deep trench, rough and uneven at one end, becoming much neater and tidier towards the other end.



"How strange," the old lady said, "Why dig a trench here...and in such difficult rocky ground?" and her husband agreed.

Just then the young man appeared earlier than his usual time.

"You're early," said the old woman, making light of their obvious curiosity, "We wondered what you were doing and we also wondered what was in the case."

"I'm digging a trench," said the man who continued, realizing a bigger explanation was appropriate. "I'm actually learning how to dig a good trench because the job I'm being interviewed for later today says that experience is essential, so I'm getting the experience. And the case...it's got my lunch in it."

He got the job.

## **Determination**

In 1883, a creative engineer named John Roebling was inspired by an idea to build a spectacular bridge connecting New York with the Long Island. However bridge building experts throughout the world thought that this was an impossible feat and told Roebling to forget the idea. It just could not be done. It was not practical. It had never been done before.

Roebling could not ignore the vision he had in his mind of this bridge. He thought about it all the time and he knew deep in his heart that it could be done. He just had to share the dream with someone else. After much discussion and persuasion he managed to convince his son Washington, an up and coming engineer, that the bridge in fact could be built.

Working together for the first time, the father and son developed concepts of how it could be accomplished and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement and inspiration, and the headiness of a wild challenge before them, they hired their crew and began to build their dream bridge.

The project started well, but when it was only a few months underway a tragic accident on the site took the life of John Roebling. Washington was injured and left with a certain amount of brain damage, which resulted in him not being able to walk or talk or even move.

"We told them so."

"Crazy men and their crazy dreams."

"It's foolish to chase wild visions."

Everyone had a negative comment to make and felt that the project should be scrapped since the Roebling's were the only ones who knew how the bridge could be built. In spite of his handicap Washington was never discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge and his mind was still as sharp as ever.

He tried to inspire and pass on his enthusiasm to some of his friends, but they were too daunted by the task. As he lay on his bed in his hospital room, with the sunlight streaming through the windows, a gentle breeze blew the flimsy white curtains apart and he was able to see the sky and the tops of the trees outside for just a moment.

It seemed that there was a message for him not to give up. Suddenly an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving this, he slowly developed a code of communication with his wife.

He touched his wife's arm with that finger, indicating to her that he wanted her to call the engineers again. Then he used the same method of tapping her arm to tell the engineers what to do. It seemed foolish but the project was under way again.

For 13 years Washington tapped out his instructions with his finger on his wife's arm, until the bridge was finally completed. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as a tribute to the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not to be defeated by circumstances. It is also a tribute to the engineers and their team work, and

to their faith in a man who was considered mad by half the world. It stands too as a tangible monument to the love and devotion of his wife who for 13 long years patiently decoded the messages of her husband and told the engineers what to do.



Perhaps this is one of the best examples of a never-say-die attitude that overcomes a terrible physical handicap and achieves an impossible goal.

Often when we face obstacles in our day-to-day life, our hurdles seem very small in comparison to what many others have to face. The Brooklyn Bridge shows us that dreams that seem impossible can be realized with determination and persistence, no matter what the odds are.

Even the most distant dream can be realized with determination and persistence.

## Chapter 3:

### *Timeless Inspirational Tales*

#### **Generosity**

Mahatma Gandhi went from city to city, village to village collecting funds for the Charkha Sangh. During one of his tours he addressed a meeting in Orissa. After his speech a poor old woman got up. She was bent with age, her hair was grey and her clothes were in tatters. The volunteers tried to stop her, but she fought her way to the place where Gandhi was sitting. "I must see him," she insisted and going up to Gandhi touched his feet. Then from the folds of her sari she brought out a copper coin and placed it at his feet.

Gandhi picked up the copper coin and put it away carefully. The Charkha Sangh funds were under the charge of Jammalal Bajaj. He asked Gandhi for the coin but Gandhi refused. "I keep cheques worth thousands of rupees for the Charkha Sangh," Jammalal Bajaj said laughingly "yet you won't trust me with a copper coin."

"This copper coin is worth much more than those thousands," Gandhi said. "If a man has several lacs and he gives away a thousand or two, it doesn't mean much. But this coin was perhaps all that the poor woman possessed. She gave me all she had. That was very generous of her. What a great sacrifice she made. That is why I value this copper coin more than thousands of rupees."



## **The Window**

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour a day to drain the fluids from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed next to the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed would live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the outside world. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, the man had said. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Lovers walked arm in arm amid flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man could not hear the band, he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Unexpectedly, an alien thought entered his head: Why should he have all the

pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything? It didn't seem fair. As the thought fermented, the man felt ashamed at first. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window - and that thought now controlled his life.

Late one night, as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room, he never moved, never pushed his own button, which would have brought the nurse running. In less than five minutes, the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing. Now, there was only silence--deathly silence.

The following morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendant to take it away-- no words, no fuss. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

Moral of the story:

The pursuit of happiness is a matter of choice...it is a positive attitude we consciously choose to express. It is not a gift that gets delivered to our doorstep each morning, nor does it come through the window. And I am certain that our circumstances are just a small part of what makes us joyful. If we wait for them to get just right, we will never find lasting joy.

The pursuit of happiness is an inward journey. Our minds are like programs, awaiting the code that will determine behaviors; like bank vaults awaiting our deposits. If we regularly deposit positive, encouraging, and uplifting thoughts, if we continue to bite our lips just before we begin to grumble and complain, if we shoot down that seemingly harmless negative thought as it germinates, we will find that there is much.

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## The Starfish

There was a man taking a morning walk at or the beach. He saw that along with the morning tide came hundreds of starfish and when the tide receded, they were left behind and with the morning sun rays, and they would die. The tide was fresh and the starfish were alive. The man took a few steps, picked one and threw it into the water. He did that repeatedly.

Right behind him there was another person who couldn't understand what this man was doing. He caught up with him and asked, "What are you doing? There are hundreds of starfish. How many can you help? What difference does it make?" This man did not reply, took two more steps, picked up another one, threw it into the water, and said, "It makes a difference to this one."



## **A Soldier's Story**

A story is told about a soldier who was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam. He called his parents from San Francisco. "Mom and Dad, I'm coming home, but I've a favor to ask. I have a friend I'd like to bring home with me. "Sure," they replied, "we'd love to meet him."

"There's something you should know," the son continued, "he was hurt pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come live with us."

"I'm sorry to hear that, son. Maybe we can help him find somewhere to live."

"No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us."

"Son," said the father, "you don't know what you're asking. Someone with such a handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can't let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He'll find a way to live on his own."

At that point, the son hung up the phone. The parents heard nothing more from him. A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide.

The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francisco and were taken to the city morgue to identify the body of their son. They recognized him, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn't know, their son had only one arm and one leg.

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## **Don't We All?**

I was parked in front of the mall wiping off my car. I had just come from the car wash and was waiting for my wife to get out of work. Coming my way from across the parking lot was what society would consider a bum. From the looks of him, he had no car, no home, no clean clothes, and no money. There are times when you feel generous but there are other times that you just don't want to be bothered. This was one of those "don't want to be bothered times."

"I hope he doesn't ask me for any money," I thought.

He didn't.

He came and sat on the curb in front of the bus stop but he didn't look like he could have enough money to even ride the bus.

After a few minutes he spoke.

"That's a very pretty car," he said.

He was ragged but he had an air of dignity around him. His scraggly blond beard kept more than his face warm.

I said, "Thanks," and continued wiping off my car.

He sat there quietly as I worked. The expected plea for money never came. As the silence between us widened something inside said, "ask him if he needs any help." I was sure that he would say "yes" but I held true to the inner voice.

"Do you need any help?" I asked.

He answered in three simple but profound words that I shall never forget. We often look for wisdom in great men and women. We expect it from those of higher learning and accomplishments. I expected nothing but an outstretched grimy hand. He spoke the three words that shook me.

"Don't we all?" he said.

I was feeling high and mighty, successful and important, above a bum in the street, until those three words hit me like a twelve gauge shotgun.

Don't we all?

I needed help. Maybe not for bus fare or a place to sleep, but I needed help. I reached in my wallet and gave him not only enough for bus fare, but enough to get a warm meal and shelter for the day. Those three little words still ring true. No matter how much you have, no matter how much you have accomplished, you need help too. No matter how little you have, no matter how loaded you are with problems, even without money or a place to sleep, you can give help. Even if it's just a compliment, you can give that.



You never know when you may see someone that appears to have it all. They are waiting on you to give them what they don't have. A different perspective on life, a glimpse at something beautiful, a respite from daily chaos, that only you through a torn world can see.

Maybe the man was just a homeless stranger wandering the streets. Maybe he was more than that. Maybe he was sent by a power that is great and wise, to minister to a soul too comfortable in themselves.

Maybe God looked down, called an Angel, dressed him like a bum, and then said, "Go minister to that man cleaning the car, that man needs help."

**Don't we all?**

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## **How Would You Like to be Remembered?**

About a hundred years ago, a man looked at the morning newspaper and to his surprise and horror, read his name in the obituary column. The newspapers had reported the death of the wrong person by mistake. His first response was shock. Am I here or there? When he regained his composure, his second thought was to find out what people had said about him. The obituary read, "Dynamite King Dies." And also "He was the merchant of death." This man was the inventor of dynamite and when he read the words "merchant of death," he asked himself a question, "Is this how I am going to be remembered?" He got in touch with his feelings and decided that this was not the way he wanted to be remembered. From that day on, he started working toward peace. His name was Alfred Nobel and he is remembered today by the great Nobel Prize.

Just as Alfred Nobel got in touch with his feelings and redefined his values, we should step back and do the same.

What is your legacy?

How would you like to be remembered?

Will you be spoken well of?

Will you be remembered with love and respect?

Will you be missed?

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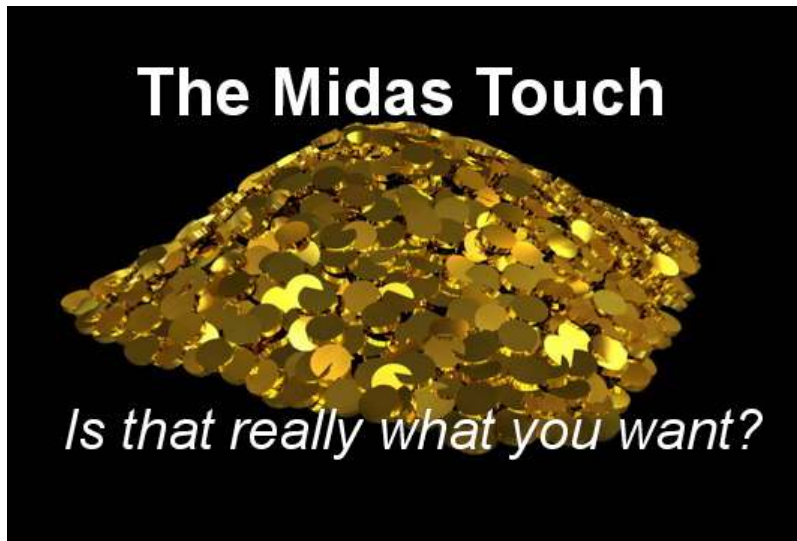
## **The Midas Touch**

We all know the story of the greedy king named Midas. He had a lot of gold and the more he had the more he wanted. He stored all the gold in his vaults and used to spend time every day counting it.

One day while he was counting a stranger came from nowhere and said he would grant him a wish. The king was delighted and said, "I would like everything I touch to turn to gold." The stranger asked the king, "Are you sure?" The king replied, "Yes." So the stranger said, "Starting tomorrow morning with the sun rays you will get the golden touch." The king thought he must be dreaming, this couldn't be true. But the next day when he woke up, he touched the bed, his clothes, and everything turned to gold. He looked out of the window and saw his daughter playing in the garden. He decided to give her a surprise and thought she would be happy. But before he went to the garden he decided to read a book. The moment he touched it, it turned into gold and he couldn't read it. Then he sat to have breakfast and the moment he touched the fruit and the glass of water, they turned to gold. He was getting hungry and he said to himself, "I can't eat and drink gold." Just about that time his daughter came running and he hugged her and she turned into a gold statue. There were no more smiles left.

The king bowed his head and started crying. The stranger who gave the wish came again and asked the king if he was happy with his golden touch. The king said he was the most miserable man. The stranger asked, "What would you rather have, your food and loving daughter or lumps of gold and her golden statue?" The king cried and asked for forgiveness. He said, "I will

give up all my gold. Please give me my daughter back because without her I have lost everything worth having." The stranger said to the king, "You have become wiser than before" and he reversed the spell. He got his daughter back in his arms and the king learned a lesson that he never forget for the rest of his life.



## Meaningless Goals



A farmer had a dog that used to sit by the roadside waiting for vehicles to come around. As soon as one came he would run down the road, barking and trying to overtake it. One day a neighbor asked the farmer "Do you think your dog is ever going to catch a car?" The farmer replied, "That is not what bothers me. What bothers me is what he would do if he ever caught one." Many people in life behave like that dog who is pursuing meaningless goals.

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## Which Road



A man was traveling and stopped at an intersection. He asked an elderly man, "Where does this road take me?" The elderly person asked, "Where do you want to go?" The man replied, "I don't know." The elderly person said, "Then takes any road. What difference does it make?"

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## Chapter 4:

### *Inspirational Women Stories From Around The World*

#### **Kara Mann**

The what? The Strongwoman competition? Kara Mann wasn't what I expected. Nor did I expect to be so fascinated and so inspired by a 23-year-old. Her look, demeanor and voice were not unlike one of the cheerleaders she has had to dead-lift in competition. Another stereotype bites the dust.

In 2004, Kara Mann became the National Strongwoman Champion, less than two years after first starting to compete in the sport. After winning that competition again as recently as 2006, she is now a two times national champ. Where did she come from and how did she get there so fast?



A native of Boston, she first got into it through a boyfriend and his family who encouraged her to give it a try. Her ascent was rapid, beginning with third place in the Massachusetts state championships. Mann shook her head when asked if she would have done anything differently, having been a three-sport athlete in high school where she succeeded at cross-country, basketball and track and field, and dabbled in gymnastics, taekwondo and playing the flute.

Today she uses her degree from Vanderbilt in chemical engineering at her job at General Electric in Cleveland and is learning to juggle her vocation and her strongwoman hobby. “You can't do it as a career.” When asked about financial rewards, she laughed. “Sometimes they give us swords, Samurai swords. Once I did get three hundred dollars, though.”

So why would someone so physically strong, athletic and focused choose this? The well-known health benefits of this level of physical conditioning aside, “It's a passion. It's a release of energy and stress for me...and you can't imagine the highs, the empowering feeling you get after being successful in a competition.”

Asked to describe a typical competition, her eyes light up. “You never know what to expect.” The unpredictable nature of each competition holds particular appeal for Mann. What is consistent about the competitions is that three aspects of skill and strength are always tested: “overhead,” “grip” (e.g., see how long you can keep two Mini Cooper cars from rolling) and “back and legs.” In addition, one can always expect the classic, signature event called Atlas Stones, where contestants carry large cement stones of varying



weight and shape over to a platform. She once pulled an A-4 military airplane 47 feet in 60 seconds.

A typical week involves strength training each weekday, followed by “implement” training on the weekends. Implement training zeroes in on the specific mechanical skills involved in the upcoming events. In the week preceding an event, the amount of implement training increases. In all three geographic settings of her life, Boston, Nashville and now Cleveland, she has connected to a network of athletes with this pursuit, most of them males, who she refers to as if they were her brothers.

Just as important as physical preparation is mental preparation. She is convinced that the quality of her mental focus at the time of her event is crucial. “You can't be distracted in the least or paying attention to your opponents.” Mann uses what she calls “angry” music, like Disturbed, to get her psyched and ready. “I don't even know what they're saying.” She attributes her success in putting mind over matter to her upbringing and to her experience in other sports.

Behind this modest, casual, relaxed demeanor, there lies a woman with strong opinions about what is wrong with the sport. She laments that there are but a handful of females who compete consistently. The corollary to that problem is the lack of financial rewards. She would like to see the women break off from the male federation, recognizing a need for more woman-power in the decision-making. She would like more consistency, predictability and regularity in dates and locations of competitions.

And perhaps most importantly, she would like to see the sport regulated. Right now there is no drug-testing whatsoever in either the male or female milieus. “I really have issues with that, since it constitutes an uneven playing field.” Mann's goal is to attract other females to this sport that she loves, and along with that, to inspire entrants to compete without “supplements.” She even envisions two separate classes for those who “do” and those who “don't.”

All of these improvements would help to shift strongwoman away from its entertainment flavor toward its status as a serious “sport.”

You can bet that Kara Mann, at 5'6” and 165 pounds, will be a force in helping shape the evolution of her sport. She's just that strong.

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## **Eileen Marie Collins (Colonel, USAF, RET.)**

NASA Astronaut

Born November 19, 1956, in Elmira, New York.

Eileen graduated from Elmira Free Academy, Elmira, New York, in 1974 and received an Associate in Science degree in mathematics/science from Corning Community College in 1976. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics and economics from Syracuse University in 1978. She also has a Master of Science degree in operations research from Stanford University in 1986 and a Master of Arts degree in space systems management from Webster University in 1989.



As a small girl she gazed up into the sky and watched the silent birds (sailplanes) soar through the air, this is where the love affair began. Eileen grew up in the "Soaring Capital of America." She was fascinated with flight

and knew that one day she wanted to fly. At the age of 19 she had saved \$1,000 and went to her local airport to ask them to show her how to fly. Her inspiration was fueled by women pilots and early astronauts.

Through years of education, determination and hard work she has logged more than 6,751 hours in both the air and space! Eileen joined the Air Force and began pilot training in 1978, the same year that NASA opened the Shuttle program to women. She became an official astronaut in 1991.

Eileen Collins is the first and currently only female Space Shuttle Commander in history!! Four space flights and 872 hours in space later Eileen retired from NASA in May 2006.

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## **Battling Dyslexia**

Rebecca, who I met at a business conference in Las Vegas, is one of the smartest people I know. Even if you were around her for an entire day, you probably wouldn't notice her disability.

"I was born with severe dyslexia," Rebecca explains. "Due to my learning disability, I was in special education classes for most of my elementary and middle school years."

Despite the challenge, she refused to let dyslexia dictate her life. Every day, she worked on overcoming her disability with the help of her parents.

"My dad would spend an hour every morning helping me with math," says Rebecca. "In the evenings, my mom would have me read books out loud and then she would quiz me on the content."

Rebecca's hard work paid off. By high school, she had advanced from special education classes all the way to honors classes. When high school came to an end, she kept striving.

"When I was a young, no one thought I could ever go to college," she confides. Not only did Rebecca end up going to college, she graduated near the top of her class. Was her journey over? Hardly.

"I always had a vision," says Rebecca, "of one day being a lawyer. But it seemed like such a crazy aspiration that I never told anyone."

Today, Rebecca's vision is a reality. She graduated from law school and is currently working her way up in one of the largest law firms on the East Coast.

Rebecca says: "I wouldn't change a thing. My learning disability still makes life a challenge but it also gave me the determination to make my dream come true."

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## **Yasmin Waljee**, 38, a lawyer, from London

Yasmin will never meet all the thousands of people she has helped. But her belief that justice is a right for all - and that the disadvantaged who can't access a diminishing legal aid system should be represented for free by some of Britain's top lawyers - drives her relentlessly on.

Yasmin, is head of Pro Bono - provision of free service by volunteer lawyers - at top legal firm Lovells.

She helps mastermind 18,000 free hours of legal help a year worldwide - from victims of domestic violence, victims of terrorist attacks including the London July 7 bombings, disabled people who are fighting for Disability Living Allowance and desperate families facing eviction in East London because they are falling behind with rent.

While Yasmin - married with a one-year-old son - claims modestly that all the above is not her work alone, she also tirelessly raises money for charity: for example, persuading her colleagues to abseil down their building and arranging a team of lawyers to help clean up a rundown area of Newham, East London.

Last year, working with a committee of staff, she raised £25,000 for Save The Children through Legally Ballroom Dancing - an event which saw 30 lawyers waltzing in front of their colleagues.

## Chapter 5:

### *Teachings And Lessons From Animals*

#### **When facing adversity: are you a Chihuahua or a Leopard?**

A lady takes her pet Chihuahua with her on a safari holiday. Wandering too far one day, the Chihuahua gets lost in the bush and soon encounters a very hungry looking leopard. The Chihuahua realizes he's in trouble, but, noticing some fresh bones on the ground, he settles down to chew on them, with his back to the big cat. As the leopard is about to leap, the Chihuahua smacks his lips and exclaims loudly, "Boy, that was one delicious leopard. I wonder if there are any more around here!" The leopard stops mid-stride, and slinks away into the trees.

"Phew," says the leopard, "that was close - that evil little dog nearly had me."

A monkey nearby sees everything and thinks he'll win a favor by putting the stupid leopard straight. The Chihuahua sees the monkey go after the leopard, and guesses he might be up to no good. When the leopard hears the monkey's story he feels angry at being made a fool, and offers the monkey a ride back to see him exact his revenge.

The little dog sees them approaching and fears the worst. Thinking quickly, the little dog turns his back, pretends not to notice them, and when the pair is



within earshot says aloud, "Now where's that monkey got to? I sent him ages ago to bring me another leopard...."

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## The Big Leap

Two frogs fell into a deep pit, and though they tried very hard they could not hop out. Their comrades peered down from the top and croaked in sympathy.

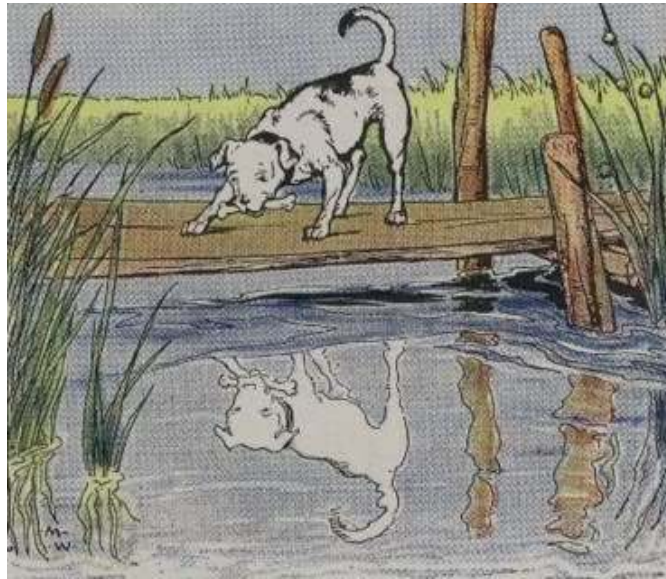
"We feel for you," they shouted, "but there's no way you can get out from there!"

On hearing this, one of the frogs lost heart, and died of fear. The other frog was deaf. He thought his comrades were shouting encouragement. Emboldened by their faith in him, he gathered up all his reserves of energy in one great jump that landed him out of the pit.



## Hang on to your own bone

Fanny the farm dog was pretty smart, but one day she got the shock of her life because no-one had ever told her about mirrors.



As a special treat, she was given a big bone. She took it down to the river bank to enjoy it in peace. As she stood there with the bone in her mouth, she looked at her reflection in the water. And what did she see? Another dog with a bone in its mouth! She wanted the other bone as well as her own, so she opened her mouth to bark and her bone fell straight in and sank to the bottom.

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## **The rooster makes its last mistake**

Two burglars were prowling around a barn one night. They could hear something moving inside, and ever so carefully they climbed in to see what it was. It was a rooster. "Ah-ha," they cried. "This will do for our supper tomorrow." They grabbed it and were about to kill it when the rooster squawked in alarm: "Please don't kill me. I can be useful to you. I can wake you at dawn every day, ready to start work on time."

"That's just what we don't want," growled the burglars. "If you wake people up they'll catch us robbing their houses." So that was the end of the rooster.

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## **The jealous goat**

A goat and a donkey lived on the same farm. The goat had to find his own food, but because he made the donkey work hard, the farmer fed him. The goat became jealous, forgetting the entire donkey's hard work. He thought if the donkey stopped working, he would get his food. So he pushed him into a large hole, and he was badly hurt. The farmer sent for the vet, who examined the donkey. "The quickest way to make him better," he said, "is to feed him with goat soup." So instead of getting the donkey's food for himself, the goat finished up as food for the donkey!

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## **Look before you eat**

You know what dogs are like. If you drop a bit of food from the table they shallow it before they know what it is. But sometimes they wish they hadn't. Fanny the farm dog wasn't allowed in while her master Josh was eating with the family. But one day she crept in and hid under the table when no-one was looking.

She kept very quiet until suddenly a big dollop of food fell next to her. She gobbled it up without thinking. Then she let out a big bowl and rushed outside, holding her tummy with one paw. The family was eating a very hot curry for supper!

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## **One good turn deserves another**

Fred was a farm-worker who found a young eagle caught in a trap. He couldn't bear to see such a beautiful bird in pain, so he released it. A few days later, he was sitting in the shade of an old wall, having bread and cheese for his lunch. Suddenly, with a flapping of wings, the eagle swooped and stole the cap from his head. It flew away just above the ground with Fred rushing after it, shouting, until it dropped his cap. Fred put it back on his head and trudged back to finish his lunch. But what do you think? Exactly where he had been sitting the old wall had collapsed! Each of them had saved the other.

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## How to live in peace

In the old days, farmers sometimes encouraged snakes and weasels to live in the barn and kill the mice that ate their corn. But on one farm there was a bad-tempered weasel and a peppery old snake, and instead of killing the mice they kept fighting each other. The mice thought this was wonderful, of course. At first, they just put their heads cautiously out of their holes to watch.



Before long, they began to form a circle around the two fighters and cheer for one side or the other. For a while, the snake and the weasel were so busy scrapping they didn't even notice. One day, however, they stopped for a rest in the middle of a particularly tiring fight. They looked around them and then at each other. "Why are we wasting so much eating time," they asked themselves. "There's enough food here to make us fat and good-tempered." And they set about gobbling up the mice.

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## **Animals Are Parents Too**

I want to let you know about an event that changed my life many years ago. It is a memory that periodically comes and goes, but it is one of the most precious memories that me and my wife share. I am thankful that we can remember it together. It's a reminder that things are not what they seem and that angels come in many packages.

We live in College Station, Texas and we were on our way home from Houston, Texas around the Weston Lakes area one Saturday or Sunday morning. And when I say morning, I'm talking 1:00 to 2:00 in the morning. We were on our way home and decided to stop at a local gas station to get coffee and something to snack on since it was a good hour and a half before we got home.

When we were done, we got back into our car and before I started it, we noticed a man standing outside in front of the building. You could tell that he was a homeless man. His clothes were tattered and worn and it looked like he had gone in and gotten him some coffee or something warm to drink since it was cold this time of the year. He must have not had enough money to get something to eat. That is not something I remember too well, because that is not what "moved" me.

The next thing I remember is a dog that walked up to the front of the building. Being a dog lover, I noticed that she was part wolf and probably part German shepherd. I could tell she was a she, because you could tell that she had been feeding puppies. She was terribly in need of something to eat

and I felt so bad for her. I knew if she didn't eat soon, she and her puppies would not make it.

Me and my wife sat there and looked at her. We noticed that people walked by and didn't even pet her, like most people do when they walk by an animal in front of a store. She might not have been as pretty and clean as most, but she still deserved better. But we still did not do anything. But someone did. The homeless man, who I thought did not buy himself anything to eat, went back into the store. And what he did brought tears to me and my wife. He had gone into the store and with what money he may have had, bought a can of dog food and fed that dog.

I know that this story isn't as inspirational as most stories, but it plays a great part in our lives. You see, that was Mother's Day weekend. And a lot of people forget that some animals are parents too. And animals as well as we are God's creations too.

It would be a better story if I could remember all the details, but even without the details, I believe it still gets the message across. It took a homeless man, to show me what I should have done. He made me a better man that day.

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## Wrapping Up

Wow! Do you feel inspired? That was a great run-through a huge collection of inspiring stories from around the world!

We all have our own stories. It is up to us, whether we want to live extraordinary lives which inspire and motivate other or not.

Even animals, in the last chapter have showed us that their courage is worth modeling. Let us strive to give our fullest gifts to the world and make the world a better place!

It is with great hope that this collection of stories has inspired you and encouraged you to spread the love to people around you.

To your success!

*Johnny S*

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