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HIS OPINION

Life: Everything Should be a Positive Lesson

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Like many individuals, I used to think that life was not providing me with a fair shake and, sadly, I viewed myself as the victim. A Murphy's Law type of attitude, if you know what I mean. What can go wrong will go wrong, was the mind set. Some of the reasons for such thinking? Growing up in a broken/dysfunctional home, living in poverty and on welfare, and domestic violence was commonplace in my home. Not to mention adultery, substance abuse, and physical abuse. Children in the neighborhood also teased and made me the "butt" end of jokes because I lacked the material elements they had. My self-esteem was zero. I was angry and bitter. Such hostility affected my interaction with law enforcement, educators, family members, neighbors, and anyone else who crossed my path.

In this day and age families and relationships are still being destroyed by drugs, violence, sexual abuse, hunger, economic hardships, homicides, deceit, and death. Natural disasters like floods, hurricanes, tornados, forest fires, earthquakes, environmental mishaps, and volcanos all take their toll on the families or an individual's self-esteem. Not to mention civil disruptions or war. All these factors create adverse emotional and psychological effects or scars on people. Then there are medical hardships such as cancer, AIDS, and other threatening illnesses.

How is it possible, then, to find something positive in the conditions or circumstances mentioned and how is it

possible to learn something positive from the experience, despite the pain and suffering? Though most painful, there is a great deal that can be learned from adversity and, in many cases, it can serve as a reality check or wake-up call for some individuals to put their life into perspective or re-evaluate their lifestyle. Adversity can be just what the doctor ordered. Some individuals heal, grow, or live in confusion/guilt as a result of adversity and others fall to the wayside. How one reacts varies. However, it is during these moments or critical stages that people have the best opportunities to grow or mature. During these periods, people can learn how strong, weak, sensitive, compassionate, wise, creative, unenlightened, selfish, or petty they are.

Bill Denby, a Vietnam veteran who lost his legs in combat, is one of the most celebrated volunteers in America and one of the most consistent lobbyist/advocates for handicapped rights. Had Denby allowed himself to drown in his self-pity, he would not be the inspiration or motivational speaker that he is today. His life did not end when he lost both legs. Denby is a great story for all individuals with physical disabilities to draw strength from. The key? Denby stopped viewing himself as the victim of an evil war and decided to make the best of a terrible situation.

When people decide to let go of the victim's stance, then they will be able to take control of their lives and responsibility for their destiny/actions. It is very easy to make excuses, sulk, blame, or accuse others of our short-

comings. Each person must be accountable for his own behavior and actions. Babe Ruth failed as a pitcher and Hank Aaron had more strikeouts than his record number of home runs. What would have happened if both men fell victim to doubt, frustration, or self-doubt? You probably wouldn't know them as you do today.

Once people learn that there is something positive in all of life's experiences, then there is a stronger willingness to take risks, dream, and play out the hand that life may deal out, even when it's from the bottom of the deck. This is not possible until people, as mentioned, fully accept, feel, and challenge the conditions confronted or brought by everyday life. Personally, growth in my life has mostly come as a result of adversity and painful losses. A fractured foot led me toward academics and away from basketball; losing both parents before the age of 14 made me leave a life of juvenile crime; getting hurt in a relationship made me realize how I hurt others; and as strange as it might sound, I am pleased for the experiences because it made me grow.

You can only see positive results when you are looking for them. Furthermore, no one individual has a corner on the market when it comes to hardships. Therefore, no one should feel like a victim or that they are treated unfairly by life's circumstances. And another thing, sometimes life's hardships and dark moments can be directly related to God's will. So, grow from the experiences and don't put a question mark where God has put a period.

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Freedom Fire Fighters Triumph

BY JIM ANDERSON

Twenty young people returned to their neighborhood from their first victory over forest fires. The Freedom Fire Fighters, as they call themselves, were recruited by Oregon Outreach, Inc. at the King Neighborhood Facility. A welcoming party of family and friends greeted them at 3:00 p.m. Friday, July 26 as they returned by bus from the Illabot fire near Rockport, WA.

The crew is predominantly African American, the first in history.

Becky Black, director of Oregon Outreach, Inc. worked tirelessly with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Mt. Hood National Forest to organize and train the crew. Keith Baker, Todd Sinner and Billy Ballastressi were hired as crew leaders.

The fighters on this first fire were: Scott Nacoste, Larry Pouncel, Eugene Green, Dan Woods, DaMarcus Henderson, Phillip Johnson, Erik Thompson, Josh Erickson, Alex Ortiz, Thomas Shinkle, Jose-Freddy Robles, Frederick Myles, Jerome Gibson, John Carlo Williams, Marcus Washington, Kimothly King and Kashi Hamon. Other members of the crew are: Mark Lind-

sey, Charles Grixby and Ronnie Wallace.

James Posey brought to Ms. Black the idea of a neighborhood forest fire fighting crew after a brainstorming session with the King Youth Concerns Committee, after a "spark" from Ray Eaglin. Mr. Posey kept his shoulder to the wheel, but for a while the project looked impossible. Luckily Ron Wyden heard about the opportunity and became a full-time supporter. Mr. Wyden got the project on track and kept it there with his continued support.

The Freedom Fire Fighters teamed up with 19 other crews and a liaison person from Gifford Pinchot National Forest Headquarters. Their enthusiasm and close teamwork were outstanding. It looks like there will be lots of calls for them when forest fires strike.

Freedom Fire Fighter tee-shirts were donated and presented to the crew upon their triumphant return.

This is an on-going project which will continue each summer.

Assisting Oregon Outreach, Inc. in this endeavor were the Portland Private Industry Council and the City of Portland.

Oregon Black-Owned Business Directory

According to Tony Brown, syndicated journalist, African-Americans spend a contemptuous 6.6% of their income on each other per year; and that rate is sure to decrease as will the African/American economic community.

Many have expressed the desire to support Black-owned businesses; however, they do not know where they are located. This problem can be easily remedied by the publication of a Black-owned business directory.

The promotion and growth of Black-owned businesses can only serve to enrich our community. Therefore, if you are an African/American business; if you are interested in developing a much needed job market for Blacks

who are the most unemployed and underemployed group of people in this state; if you are concerned about the growing number of new businesses sprouting-up in our community that are not Black-owned and do not serve to enhance our community's needs; and if you are interested in economic independence for African-Americans, submit your business name, address and phone number for publication in the Oregon Black-owned Business Directory.

The sooner we have a workable list the sooner we can get to work. For more information please contact Edith Throver at P.O. Box 1001, Portland, Oregon 97201.

Creed of the black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from social and national antagonisms when it accords to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are gurt as long as anyone is held back.

Success and the Right Attitude Go Hand in Hand

Clarence Parker is a very confident man. He knows that success is not something you win in the lottery, but must work hard to achieve. "My formula for success is simple--hard work and the right attitude; everything else will fall into place," he says. It also doesn't hurt to have a couple of degrees and a background that includes finance.

Clarence Parker, a native of Buffalo, NY, had set his sights high from day one. Upon graduation from the University of Buffalo, he set out to make his mark in business. He went to work at Marine Midland Bank as a loan officer and soon after that became a branch manager. He was not content to be a branch manager so when a corporation under the umbrella of Kitty Cat Copper called, Clarence was ready. He decided it was time to get off the east coast and see the rest of the world. He set out to Seattle to entertain a job offer that he had no intention of taking, but the Boeing Corp. made him an offer he could not refuse. He visited Los Angeles and wanted to settle down there but the money was too good to turn down; let's say he could name his own figure. Clarence thought he would be working

in the Seattle area but the Boeing Corp. sent him to Richland, WA. Once there he rose fast within the company to become the Computer Services Accounting Manager answering only to the president.

He enjoyed the position for awhile but once again his adventurous spirit won out and he decided it was time to venture further on his own. He contacted 100 of the Fortune 500 Companies. "Most young Afro American males are afraid to go for it all. Once they get the degree, they settle for a corporate salary and expense account, the comfort zone so to speak." In Clarence's opinion more blacks need to get into the private sector in order to help Afro Americans establish an economic climate that will be suitable for uplifting the plight of Afro Americans.

Clarence chose to work in the car business and took the opportunity to join the Chrysler Corp. Minority Dealership Program. Participants attend school in Detroit in order to learn the business and then participate in on-the-job training as a General Manager in one of the dealerships. They work in every department of the car industry to

learn the ins and outs of the trade. Clarence did his on-the-job training at Simpson's in Richland, WA, and waited for his opportunity. It came when Lou Boston wanted out of the Chrysler Plymouth dealership in Gresham, and Clarence stepped in. The car business for Clarence is a great opportunity to grow in the business sector.

The Gresham dealership is doing well. Clarence is restructuring the business to fit his taste and applying his own formula for success. He says, "My priority right now is to get the business up and running. Once I do that I will have more time to get involved in community affairs." But first things first and the right attitude is the key for business success. He plans to make his mark in the car business and from there--who knows?

Clarence Parker is not one to fear success, for fear of failure is not in his vocabulary. The City of Gresham has acquired a fine business mind and the Afro American community of Portland can't wait to experience the attitude adjustment that comes with the Clarence Parker formula for success.

Pointers For Parents

Your Child: Allergy Prone?



A child taking certain allergy medications may not be able to stay alert in school.

One of the first ways to tell if your child has developed an allergy is if he or she sneezes a lot, often in rapid succession. Other indications are runny or congested nose, itching of the eyes, and plugged ears and sinus headaches. If your child has any of these symptoms, see your doctor.

Not only can doctors quickly detect an allergy, they can prescribe a

medication that will relieve the bothersome symptoms yet not make a child drowsy. Many over-the-counter antihistamines cause drowsiness. A child's sneezing may stop, but because he or she is drowsy, school performance may suffer. Some medications also cause excitability in children, making it difficult for them to concentrate.



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