

Prospering Through Problems

by **Steven D Huff**

Remember how easy problems used to be solved in old TV shows? The Lone Ranger and his faithful Indian companion come riding into town. Within ten minutes they have understood the problem, identified the bad guys, and set out in pursuit of them. They quickly outwit and capture the bad guys with no one actually getting hurt, of course. With the bad guys behind bars the scene shifts to the helpless victims. One turns to the other and asks, "Who was that masked man?" The other replies, "Why, that was the Lone Ranger!" Then we see Silver rear up and with a mighty "Hi-ho Silver," the Lone Ranger and his companion ride away.

If only it were that easy. Real life experience reminds us that problems and adversity tax our energy, our motivation and our productivity. Yet our greatest chance to succeed comes when we face problems head on and benefit from the lessons they bring. When problems get you down, be encouraged by this saying, "A man sometimes finds profit in adversity."

Here are some of the benefits of working through adversity:

- Adversity inspires new ideas - The old adage, "Necessity is the mother of invention" should have this corollary: "Adversity is the mother of new ideas." Often the challenge of a problem will force us into new ways of thinking. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, once observed, "When you have eliminated the impossible, that which remains, however improbable, must be the truth." Adversity is similar. It causes us to look at new ideas, eliminating the impossible and trying options that previously seemed improbable. Often the solution is right there.
- Adversity creates a sense of unity and purpose - Trials often renew our perspective. An impending problem can be the catalyst that brings people together. Nothing unifies a group of people more, or gives them a greater sense of purpose, than coming together to overcome a stiff challenge. Make sure you let adversity clarify what you're all about.
- Adversity motivates us to change - There's a difference between quitting and changing. Some people jump ship at the first sign of a problem. Don't let adversity turn you into a quitter. Change is different. Change is the acknowledgment that you need to grow and improve. Remember, "most people don't change when they see the light, but when they feel the heat." Let adversity help change you into the professional you need to become.
- Adversity develops character - James Bilkey reminds us, "You will never be the person you can be if pressure, tension and discipline are taken out of your life." Adversity is the trial of principle. Without adversity it is difficult to know the depth or the strength of your character. According to Zig Ziglar, you can learn more about a person by spending a few minutes watching them react to adversity than by spending days and weeks watching them respond to the "good times" of life. Remember, "Adversity makes men; good fortune makes monsters."