

Five Reasons Why Bad Things Happen



How to Turn Tragedies Into Triumph

by Brownell Landrum

CHAPTER 17: PRAYER

As established earlier, prayer is talking to the Divine (or your Higher Power) and meditation is listening to God. Both are critical in our communication with the Divine and we have previously discussed ways to meditate or listen. But what about the prayer side of the discussion?

WHAT IS PRAYER?

The following quote from Betty J. Eadie's book, *Embraced by the Light*, is a beautiful description of what she learned about prayer during a Near Death Experience,:

"I saw the sphere of Earth rotating in space. I saw many lights shooting up from the Earth like beacons. Some were very broad and charged into heaven like broad laser beams. Others resembled the illumination of small pen lights, and some were mere sparks. I was surprised, as I was told that these beacons of power were the prayers of people on earth.

"I saw angels rushing to answer the prayers. They were organized to give as much help as possible...I was distinctly told that all prayers of desire are

heard and answered. When we have great need, or when we're praying for other people, the beams project straight from us and are immediately visible.... Our prayers for others have great strength, but can only be answered as far as they don't infringe on the others' free will..."

Prayer is Infinitely More Powerful Through Integrated Alignment

As discussed in the chapter on Subconscious Sabotage, human thought has awesome power, and conscious, directed, loving thought (prayer), through Integrated Alignment, has even more power. Larry Dossey, M.D. in his book, *Healing Words – The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*, said, "We will never be able to take full advantage of the power of the mind to shape our health – including the mind's use of prayer – until we broaden our concept of "consciousness." This means including the unconscious."

The unconscious mind can initiate or cooperate with prayer and even mediate the effects.

- Larry Dossey

Directed Prayer vs. Non-Directed Prayer

Directed Prayer is used to request and manifest something we want in our lives – health, money and material objects, success, acceptance, etc.

"Bart, with \$10,000, we'd be millionaires!
We could buy all kinds of useful things like... love!"

– Homer Simpson, *The Simpsons*

Non-Directed Prayer is more open-ended, asking more for guidance and positive feelings than for specific items or outcomes. Research has shown that, although both types are effective, non-directed prayer is twice as effective as directed prayer.¹ This isn't surprising when you consider two things. First, Non-Directed

¹ Research from Spendthrift, cited by Dossey in his book *Healing Words*..

Prayer is a request for feelings, which all stem from love – which is in infinite supply from the Divine. Second, Non-Directed Prayer is detached and surrenders the specific outcome – a key to successful prayer.

Are All Prayers Answered?

What is the answer to the quintessential question: Are all prayers answered? I remember going to a spiritual talk as a high-schooler where the priest said that all prayers are answered in one of three ways: “Yes” (and you get what you ask for), “Wait” or “I’ll give you something better.” I’ve thought about that talk ever since, and would like to amend it with my own viewpoint.

Not to sound trite, but it depends on the request – not only whether it’s a directed prayer vs. a non-directed prayer, but it also depends on the requestor as well as who is being prayed “to.” Assuming that all prayers are to a benevolent, loving, Divine Higher Power, some prayers are always answered “Yes”, some are answered “No,” some are “Wait” and some are “I’ll give you something better.”

- If we ask for love, the answer is always “Yes.” But we need to remember to keep asking!
- If we ask to experience inside of us, or express to others, any of the following feelings that are expressions of love, the answer is always “Yes”:

Awe, Acceptance, Admiration, Allegiance, Appreciation, Assertiveness, Beauty, Bliss, Brilliance, Caring, Cleanliness, Commitment, Compassion, Confidence, Consideration, Contentment, Cooperation, Courage, Courtesy, Creativity, Delight, Dependability, Detachment, Determination, Devotion, Diligence, Discernment, Ease, Enjoyment, Enthusiasm, Esteem, Excellence, Faith, Faithfulness, Flexibility, Forgiveness, Friendliness, Generosity, Gentleness, Grace, Gratitude, Happiness, Harmony, Heaven, Helpfulness, Honesty, Honor, Humility, Idealism, Integrity, Joy, Joyfulness, Justice, Kindness, Love,

Loyalty, Magnificence, Marvel, Mercy,
Moderation, Modesty, Obedience, Order,
Orderliness, Patience, Peace, Peacefulness,
Perseverance, Pleasure, Prayerfulness, Purity,
Purposefulness, Quality, Reliability, Respect,
Responsibility, Reverence, Righteousness,
Sacrifice, Satisfaction, Self-Discipline, Serenity,
Service, Steadfastness, Tact, Thankfulness,
Tolerance, Tranquility, Trust, Trustworthiness,
Truthfulness, Understanding, Unity, Value,
Wisdom, Wonder, Zeal

- If we ask for peace within, the answer is always “Yes.” But, as with love and other loving feelings, we can get distracted and need to keep asking.
- If we ask for learning, the teaching is provided, but the learning is up to us.
- If we ask for guidance, the direction is provided, but it’s up to us to follow the path.
- If we ask for alignment with Divine will, it will be provided, but we need to trust that what we receive *is* in accordance with Divine will.
- If we ask to exhibit selflessness, it’s up to us to fulfill that prayer (and we’ll be shown how to do it).
- If we ask for material things, the answer can vary, depending on what we’re asking for, whether we’re too attached to the outcome, and whether providing it’s for the best and highest good of all concerned. To ensure success, we need to dig deeper to the “why” of the thing we want – what internal feelings we want to generate instead of the external “stuff.” If the feelings are genuine and come from love, and generate a true expression of appreciation, we’re more likely to get what we pray for.
- If we ask for help with relationships, it depends on what we are asking for. If we ask for more love and acceptance, then we’re guaranteed to get it. If we pray for someone to do something, we’re infringing on the other person’s free will. Not only is this outside of the domain of the Divine, getting it may actually

cause harm in the situation (to ourselves or the other person). If we ask to be released from attachment and to allow the relationship to unfold according to Divine Will, our wish will be granted.

Are You Listening?

As discussed earlier, prayer is talking to God, but we need to meditate in order to listen. Simply put, it means we need to get centered, be quiet, and pay attention. We can do this through the types of meditation discussed earlier (Sitting, Guided, Mind-Clearing), or through other avenues, like when exercising, dreaming, mowing the lawn, etc.

Even if we're listening, sometimes we have a problem recognizing the answer to our prayers. This could be for several reasons. It could be that we're too attached to the outcome and we can't recognize the open window because we're pounding too hard on a door to open. It could be because we're limited in our view and have blinders on. The solution to both of these problems is to keep an open mind and be open to solutions that give you the feelings you asked for, not the "stuff."

Another reason we could have a problem recognizing the answer may be that we really don't trust our Higher Power to bring what is best for us. This could be a challenge of faith, which is an opportunity to dig deeper to connect your three Selves and the Divine.

Suggestions from Philosophers and Theologians

- "The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays." - Soren Kierkegaard
- "The wise man in the storm prays to God, not for safety from danger, but deliverance from fear." - Ralph Waldo Emerson
- "Being mortal, never pray for an untroubled life; But ask the gods to give you an enduring heart" - Menander of Athens
- "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." - Matthew 5:44

- “Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.” - Saint Augustine
- “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you.” - I Thessalonians 5: 16-18
- “Humanity is never so beautiful as when praying for forgiveness, or else forgiving another” - Jean Paul Richter

Detachment and Surrender

In an interview with NBC's Ann Curry, Oprah Winfrey described the power of detachment and surrender to a Higher Power when she had auditioned for a role in “The Color Purple.” She desperately wanted and prayed for the role because, she said, “I remember sitting home and I think it took my breath away literally. I remember closing the book and weeping, because my God, this is my story.”

Although she had heard they were looking for an experienced actress to play the part, she was crushed, even hating herself, blaming herself for not getting the part because she was overweight. She entered a fat farm, trying to “lose 50 pounds in 2 weeks.”

She “realized at that time that my obsession had gotten the best of me. I'd never wanted anything more than I wanted to be in “The Color Purple.” Never. And it was life changing for me, because I decided I had to let it go. So I go out on the track by myself. It's cold. It's raining. I'm alone, running around the track. And I start asking ‘God, dear God, just like Celie. Please help me to let it go so that I can move on with my life.’ And I start singing, ‘I surrender all. I surrender all.’”

Miraculously, just at that moment she received a call from the movie's director, Steven Spielberg, offering her the part, with one condition, “If you lose a pound, you will possibly lose this part.”

This story shows how important it is for prayer to include surrender and detachment to Divine will for the outcome. It also demonstrates a great example of how we need to love and accept ourselves the way we are – because we may already be perfect for our destiny!

Wouldn't It Be Nice?

Two key factors of asking for Divine assistance are no attachment to the outcome, and that you'd be appreciative if you received your request.

“Wouldn't it be nice?” is the perfect way to ask Spirit for what you'd like to see in your life. First, it demonstrates that you're making a simple request, not a demand, with no expectation or attachment to the outcome. And second, it shows your Higher Power that you think “it would be nice” if the request came through, indicating that you'd appreciate it!

When we pray for a specific outcome in a particular situation, we are presuming to know how the world should proceed.
– Larry Dossey

PRAYER GUIDELINES

The following are some guidelines for prayer to connect with your Higher Power:

Integration

Before beginning any prayer, engage all three of your Selves in the process. Make sure your Inner Self is cleared of all negative emotions and fears, and is aligned with the intent of the prayer.

Gratitude

Be sure to give thanks to your Higher Power² for:

- The gifts you have in your life
- Infinite Divine Love

If the purpose of your prayer is to manifest something in your life, it's helpful to indicate your appreciation of the gift – as though you already have it.

² Note: if you pray to the Universe, remember that The Universe” is a big place and not necessarily Divine. Instead of a deity, please be sure that you ask for the highest level guidance available.

Praise

Show reverence and love for your Higher Power. This means that you recognize that you're calling upon an energy greater than yourself.

Love and/or Peace

Ask for love: To feel love, to find love, to express love, to act in love. Love is the most powerful energy in the universe, and it's available to all of us, at all times. Peace is also a very powerful expression of love.

Experiments in prayer suggest that love is one of the most important factors influencing its effectiveness.

- Larry Dossey

Alignment

Ask for Alignment with Divine Will. A few famous prayers requesting alignment include, "Let thy will and mine be one" and "Let me delight in thy will and walk in thy ways." And, of course, the simple alignment prayer provided in the chapter on resolving your Reason Why: "Let Divine Will Fill My Heart and Guide My Actions."

Guidance

Ask for Divine Guidance. How you can:

- Do the best you can with in every situation you encounter.
- Help others, either directly or indirectly by serving as a model of love.

Awareness

Ask for help to see the signs from Spirit, including asking:

- To see the potential silver lining or Blessing in Disguise.

Selflessness

When asking for something, ask "if it's for the highest good of all concerned." It is important to never infringe on the rights of others, especially through prayer.

Commitment/Loyalty

Demonstrate that you're committed to following through and are loyal to the Divine by doing so.

Release

Release the message from yourself up to your Higher Power, to bring you what is best for you. This also includes detachment from the results, if you're using the prayer to ask for something.

What Prayer Should *Not* Do:

- Infringe on another's rights or free will.
- Restrict or limit the Divine from providing what's best.
- Nag. Don't nag when you pray! Your Higher Power knows what you want; you don't have to nag Him. The more you pester and nag for what you want, the more you'll find it to be elusive, because you're showing that you're too attached to the outcome (an important Lesson!)

Be Careful What You Pray For

In addition to the Lessons discussed earlier from Larry Dossey's book, *Be Careful What You Pray For*, about the potentially harmful effects of prayer, we should also pay close attention to the things we think we want in our lives, including success, health, abundance, etc. If we're not integrated and aligned, we may receive exactly what we ask for – but find that we're either not satisfied with the result, or perhaps are even deeply troubled by it.

Affluenza is a term that describes the stress associated with money and financial success. Many of us know that financial adversity can cause anxiety, but having a lot of money can create problems as well. Research has shown that the larger the square footage in a home, the greater the likelihood for divorce. And the more possessions you have, the more problems you can have. We may dream of having a vacation home, for example, but not realize it would mean twice the bills and upkeep.

This doesn't mean that it's wrong to ask for external possessions – as long as we realize that not only doesn't it produce functional (internal) happiness, but there can also be a downside to every request.

Having Someone Pray for You

If someone asked if she could pray for you, what would you say? Would it matter if you knew her or not? What if you were facing surgery and your physician asked if he/she could pray? What if you found out that someone prayed for you without your permission? Would it bother you, or would you be grateful? Would it matter what their belief system is? Would it matter how they prayed – what they said – and to whom?

As we know, there's amazing power in thought. Having others pray for us can be extremely helpful. But it can also be uncomfortable – or perhaps even counter-productive – if it isn't delivered and received with the highest energy and intent.

There can be problems with having other people pray for you:

- They could be trying to influence your belief system. For example, they could pray that you go to a particular church, a place that isn't comfortable to you.
- They could have a hidden wish or agenda in the outcome of your experience. For example, they could hope that you keep your job so that you can help them find a position with the same company – while the best thing for you could be to move onto another career.
- They could misunderstand what you'd like, yet want something different for you. For example, you could say you want a particular relationship to work out, and you pray that you stay married. However, the outcome of their prayer could be that you do, indeed stay married, but are still unhappy.
- Even if their wishes are aligned with yours, they could be troublesome. For example, say you want to be healed from a serious illness. They could pray for your healing as well, and it works – your illness is gone. But if you didn't figure out the Reason Why, you may have to face a bigger problem in the future.

These interferences could come from the best intentions, or they could include Subconscious Sabotage from the other person. It can be very complicated! However, the guidelines provided below offer the best advice for praying for others and having others pray for you.

Praying for Others and Why the Prayer Study Didn't Work

Praying for others is just as complicated. In 2005 a study was done to measure the effect of prayer. As reported by Rob Stein of the Washington Post, "Praying for sick strangers does not improve their prospects of recovering, according to a large, carefully designed study that casts doubt on the widely held belief that being prayed for can help a person heal. The study of more than 700 heart patients, one of the most ambitious attempts to test the medicinal power of prayer, showed that those who had people praying for them from a distance, and without their knowledge, were no less likely to suffer a major complication, end up back in the hospital or die."

Although this study was widely debated by scientists and theologians, the "Reason Why" the study didn't work was crystal clear to me: *Because no one should interfere with the rights of others.* Each of these patients had their own Reason Why they got cancer.

For some, Subconscious Sabotage was the cause. Their own negative thinking produced the disease. For these people, praying for the removal of the disease would only have been a temporary "cure."

For others, developing cancer might have been a Karmic payback to something they had done. Unless the Karmic debt was paid, the disease would continue. Conversely, perhaps the disease offered a chance to earn some positive Karma by helping others.

Some of the patients may have been learning a valuable lesson through their disease, which could've been thwarted if the outsider's prayers for their healing had worked.

The cancer could've also been a test, to see if the patient would react to the disease with anger or with faith.

And, finally, perhaps the cancer held a Reward for the patient. If the study was effective, the people praying could've robbed the patients of the blessings often found through disease.

However, if the study had followed the guidelines listed below, I believe it would have been significantly more effective.

Guidelines for Praying for Others and Having Others Pray for Us

Both praying for others and having others pray for us are safest and most effective when the following suggestions are applied.

Ask for:

- Divine love, guidance and support
- Help to learn any Lessons involved
- Strength to handle anything that comes with grace and dignity
- Faith to keep believing and find meaning
- Compassion to and from others
- Awareness to look for signs and find guidance
- Connection to their 3 selves and the Divine
- Alignment with Divine Will
- Help to face, feel and free any fears or harmful emotions.
- Forgiveness toward a perpetrator

And the simplest thing is also the most influential:

- Send love and ask for love.

Great Times to Pray

When you:

- Wake up
- Go to sleep
- Eat
- Pay bills
- Are trying something new or embarking on an adventure

Prayer

- Are in a potentially risky situation
- Are trying to connect with people (especially challenging people)
- Are grateful
- Are happy!

Old Man: "It goes like this. Let's see now: 'Protect me from knowing what I don't need to know. Protect me from even knowing that there are things to know that I don't know. Protect me from knowing that I decided not to know about the things that I decided not to know about. Amen.' That's it. It's what you pray silently inside yourself anyway, so you may as well have it out in the open."

Arthur: "Hmmm, Well, thank you - "

Old Man: "There's another prayer that goes with it that's very important, so you'd better jot this down, too."

Arthur: "OK."

Old Man: "It goes, 'Lord, lord, lord...' It's best to put that bit in, just in case. You can never be too sure. 'Lord, lord, lord. Protect me from the consequences of the above prayer. Amen...' And that's it. Most of the trouble people get into in life comes from missing out that last part."

- Old Man Oracle's prayer given to Arthur Dent in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

- You lose everything and have to move in with someone who is abusive.
- Your father beat you as a child.
- Your dog is killed.
- Your country is the victim of a terrorist attack.
- You're stranded on a deserted island.
- You were falsely accused of abuse and lost custody of your children.
- Your business manager steals all your money.
- Your spouse/partner cheats on you.
- You're diagnosed with an illness that makes you lose your ability to think clearly.
- You have a lifelong struggle with your weight/body image.
- Your daughter is murdered by her husband, but he's free and has custody of their children.
- You contract an incurable sexually transmitted disease.
- Someone close to you is dying.
- You are at death's door.
- Other _____.

PRAYER EXAMPLES

Christian

The Lord's Prayer

Looking at the Lord's Prayer as an example, it includes the following elements:

Praise:

- "Hallowed be Thy Name"

Alignment:

- "Thy Will be done"

Guidance:

- Asking for forgiveness from others:
- "Forgive us our trespasses"
- Forgiving others:
- "As we forgive those who trespass against us"
- Asking to be guided away from the things that may be bad for us:
- "And lead us not into temptation"
- Asking us not to be a victim of – or a perpetrator of – harm, disaster, etc.
- "But deliver us from evil."
- Release and praise
- "For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory."

Commitment/Loyalty:

- "For ever and ever."

Release:

- "Amen"³

St. Francis

The following prayer, attributed to St. Francis, clearly demonstrates Love/Peace, Alignment, Guidance, Awareness and Selflessness:

³ Although "Amen" may be used as an expression of release, it does not send a strong message, and may just convey an ending.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O, Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much
seek:
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved, as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

A Course in Miracles/Marianne Williamson

A Course in Miracles offers prayers for many specific instances, including anxiety, happy marriage, cancer, loneliness, care giving, fear and more. The following example is from Marianne Williamson's book, *A Return to Love*, and is a demonstration of Love and Peace, Alignment, Guidance, Awareness, Selflessness and Release.

Dear God, my desire, my priority is inner peace. I want the experience of love. I don't know what would bring that to me. I leave the results of this situation in your hands. I trust your will. May your will be done. Amen.

Here is another prayer from Williamson's book.

"Dear God, please give my life some sense of purpose. Use me as an instrument of your peace. Use my talents and abilities to spread love. I surrender my job to you. Help me to remember that my real job is to love the world. Thank you very much. Amen."

The next prayer, is the “Daily Prayer for Our Nation” from *A Course in Miracles*, and it shows Gratitude, Praise, Love, Alignment and Release.

O blessed Father,
One of the greatest blessings in our lives is the family that You have placed us in. Even in the midst of occasional headaches that our loved ones may cause, these families give us the stability that we long for, the love that we need, and the strength that we could not obtain on our own. Lord, help us to appreciate all of the ways that You are able to care for us through our families. Give us the energy we need so that in everything we do, we are caring for our spouses, children, parents, siblings, and all the other relatives, as they have cared for us. We offer this prayer in Your Name. Amen.

Buddhist

The following Buddhist prayer, Universal Love Aspiration, exhibits Praise, Love, Alignment, Guidance, Awareness, Selflessness and Release.

Through the working of Great Compassion
in their hearts,
May all beings have happiness
and the causes of happiness,
May all be free from sorrow
and the causes of sorrow;
May all never be separated from the
sacred happiness, which is sorrowless;
And may all live in equanimity,
Without too much attachment
and too much aversion;
and live believing in the equality of
all that lives.

Judaism

The following is a short Jewish prayer, called *Modeh Ani* or “I Give Thanks,” which should be recited immediately upon waking in the morning, which shows Gratitude, Praise, and Love (compassion):

I give thanks to You, living and everlasting King,
for you have returned my soul to me with
compassion. Great is your faithfulness.

Another Jewish prayer, *Asher Yatzar*, demonstrates Praise and Gratitude for the workings of the physical body:

Blessed are You, HaShem, our God, King of the
Universe, Who formed man with intelligence, and
created within him many openings and many
hollow spaces; it is revealed and known before the
Seat of Your Honor, that if one of these would be
opened or if one of these would be sealed it would
be impossible to survive and to stand before You
(even for one hour). Blessed are You, HaShem,
Who heals all flesh and does wonders.

Kabbalah

The Kabbalah offers “Five Tools Of Being Sincere With God.”

1. Expect The Good
2. Be Shocked If You Don't Get It
3. Listen To God's Lessons
4. Focus On What You Want
5. Make An Effort

Qur'an

The following prayer from the Qur'an includes Praise, Alignment and Guidance.

| In the Name of God, the Merciful, the |
| Compassionate |

Appendix

Praise belongs to God, Lord of all Being
the All-merciful, the All-compassionate
the Master of the Day of Doom
Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for
succor
Guide us in the straight path
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful
nor of those who are astray.

Hindu

The following Hindu Prayer demonstrates a request for Peace, Guidance, Awareness, Selflessness and Commitment.

O Lord, Lead Us From Untruth To Truth,
Lead Us From Darkness To Light,
Lead Us From Death To Immortality,
[Aum](#) (the universal sound of God)
Let There Be Peace Peace Peace.

Bahá'í

The Bahá'í faith requires obligatory prayer daily, as in the following, which exhibits Praise, Commitment and Selflessness.

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created
me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at
this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy
might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is
none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-
Subsisting.

Druid

The following Druid's prayer shows Praise, Love and Guidance.

Grant, God, thy refuge;
and in refuge, strength;

and in strength, understanding;
and in understanding, knowledge;
and from knowledge, knowledge of what is right;
and from knowledge of what is right, the love of
it;
and from loving, the love of God.
God and all goodness.

James Redfield

This prayer, from James Redfield in his book, *The Tenth Insight, Holding the Vision*, is an example of several of the guidelines: Gratitude, Praise, Alignment, Guidance, Awareness, Selflessness, and Commitment/Loyalty.

Holy Spirit, who solves all problems, who lights all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who give me the Divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances of my life you are with me.

I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things and to confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you, even and in spite of all material illusion.

I want to be with you in eternal glory.

Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine.

Pathwork

The following prayer is an excerpt from Pathwork lecture #138, and includes several of the key elements: Integration, Alignment, Guidance, Awareness, Selflessness, Commitment/Loyalty and Release:

Whatever I already am, I want to devote to life. I desperately want life to make use of the best of what I have and who I am. I may not be sure at this moment in what way this could happen, and even if I have ideas, I will allow for the greater intelligence and wisdom deep within me to guide me. I will let life itself decide how a fruitful interchange can take

place between it and me. For whatever I give to life, I have received from it, and I wish to return it to the great cosmic pool, to bring more benefit to others. This, in turn, must inevitably enrich my own life to the exact measure that I willingly give to life, for truly life and I are one. When I withhold from life, I withhold from myself...When I withhold from others, I withhold from myself. Whatever I already am, I want to let flow into life. And whatever more in me can be utilized, still waiting to be brought to fruition, I request, I decide, and I desire that it be put to constructive use, so as to enrich the atmosphere around me.

Here is another Pathwork prayer, from Lecture #181:

I want to expand my life. I want to experience total love and pleasure supreme, without negativities or blocks. I want to give myself completely in love. I want to have health, fulfillment, abundance in every area of life. It is possible to have such a rich, good life. I am willing to give to life as much as I wish to obtain. I do not want to cheat life by secretly wanting more than I am willing to give. I want to shed all falseness, all selfishness, self-centeredness, negativity and destructiveness, no matter how hard this at may at first seem. I want to shed all illusions I have about myself, for this is the price for leading such a rich life, and I am willing to pay for it...My own happiness will contribute to the well-being of others. I am willing to shed my ego defenses and all negativity, to give and receive the best. I am willing to accept difficulties along the way, for I know that in overcoming them I will become receptive to all the goodness of life. I am willing to grow from my difficulties rather than childishly complain about them, as if someone else had given them to me. I will overcome all self-pity

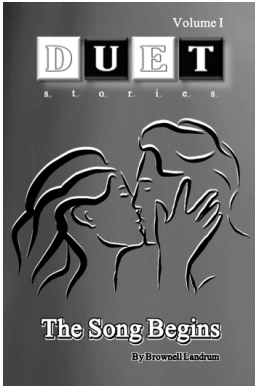
and exaggerated fear because I know that they are only manipulative tricks of the childish mind to avoid accepting life as it is.

Prayer of the Unknown Confederate Soldier

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I had asked for, but everything that I had hoped
for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.

The author of the above prayer is unknown, but the message is powerful and lasting, and helps us understand the meaning of life.

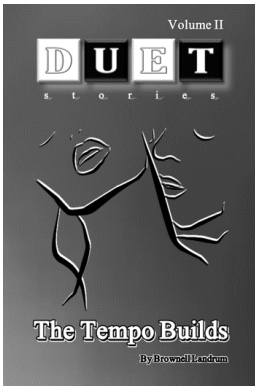
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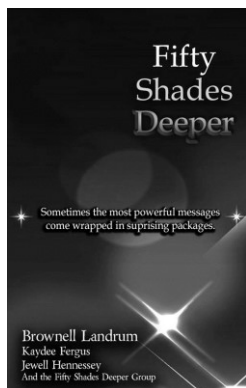


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