

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



"IT'S ON MY MIND..."
Danny H. Parris

Famous Failures

A great many people suffer depression because they feel their are failures. Let's discuss some personalities of failure.

I heard about a young fellow who went off to college. In a few days he wrote home and said, "Elected president of my class. A feather in my cap." A few days later another letter came, "Pledged by the best fraternity on campus. Another feather in my cap." A few days went by and another letter came. "Got the leading part in the drama club's presentation. Another feather in my cap." Several weeks passed and a telegram came. "Flunked all of my courses, can't stay in school. Send money so I can fly home." The father wired back, "Attach those feathers and fly home."

Sometimes people don't know how to be sympathetic in our failures. It is encouraging to know that failure need not be fatal, or final. I am grateful that the history books are filled with personalities who failed numerous times, but who made good because they would not allow failure to be final. I thank God for the famous failures. They inspire us never to give up.

Oliver Goldsmith said, "Our greatest glory consists not in never failing, but rising every time we fall."

Babe Ruth, for years baseball's greatest attraction, had a record in futility unapproached by any other player in baseball history. He struck out 1,330 times. But we don't remember his strikeouts. We remember his 714 home runs.

Thomas Edison, who had only three months of formal schooling, was always trying experiments that failed. Yet we never think of Edison as a failure. At one point he had experimented 10,000 times with his storage battery and still couldn't get it to work. A friend sought to comfort him. Edison said, "Why, I have not failed,

I've just discovered 10,000 ways that won't work." Edison, nearly deaf, patented more than 1,100 inventions during his sixty years of experimentation. He failed more than he succeeded but no one would call this man a failure.

Napoleon finished 42nd in his class of 43 students, but this academic failure conquered Europe. And there are many others who started out poorly but finished well because they refused to give up.

David Livingston, who opened up Africa to the gospel, got up to preach his first sermon and forgot everything he had planned to say. Embarrassed, he ran from the building and into the darkness thinking that his life was over. But, today, if you go to Westminster Abbey you will see the grave of the great missionary. There are no failures buried in these hallowed halls.

Lou Gehrig was referred to as "Piano Legs," but he set an all time high consecutive game record of 2,130 games and became known as the "Iron Man of Baseball."

Louis Pasteur's teacher wrote of him as "the meekest, smallest, and least promising child in my class."

During the French and Indian War at Fort Necessity, a young American officer gave in to the enemy, but we don't look at George Washington as a failure. Although, he lost two-thirds of the battles he fought during the Revolutionary War, he won the war, founded a nation and became the first President of the United States and the Father of Our Nation.

Phillip Brooks started out as a school teacher. His ambition was to teach school. He never wanted to be a preacher. But when he was dropped from his teaching position, God directed him in a different direction. The next time you sing, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" be encouraged. Failure need never be final.

Don't be depressed that you have made some mistakes and failed a few times, God may have something great waiting for you. If you feel you must quit wait until day after tomorrow.

Sirendy

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Granny and Aunt Mabel were two similar women. Both were hardworking and stubborn. Both of them could be hot headed and quick tempered. At times they loved each other and at times they despised each other. The relationship between my Granny and her sister-in-law (Papa's sister) could be sister-like, adversarial and empathetic. And Granny had different names for her depending upon the situation at hand.

The marriages between Papa and Granny and then Mabel and Uncle Hollis were very close together. The couples were constantly visiting each other and swapping work on each other's farm. Hollis helped Papa clear his farm and Papa helped Hollis clear his farm. Granny and Mabel swapped recipes and helped their mother-in-law with her housework. But, the relationship between the sisters-in-law soon began to cool.

As Granny came to know and understand the individual members of Papa's family she began to realize Mabel dominated the family. Mabel was her Daddy's pet and every one of her siblings knew it. Mabel usually got whatever she wanted from her Daddy and Mother. For example, Papa wanted to buy the home place from his Daddy and Mother. They refused and gave the home place to his youngest brother. Uncle C. L. lost the home place because he couldn't pay the taxes. Once again Papa offered to buy the home place from his parents. Once again they refused and had to go to the courthouse to pay the back taxes to get the home place back in their name. Finally, Aunt Mabel was given the home place by her parents.

Sometime after this Granny began calling Aunt Mabel by the name of May Bell when she was aggravated by Mabel's antics. Shortly after Mabel received the home place she and Papa's father died. Their Daddy owned close to 500 acres of land. Papa paid for the funeral and his father's medical expenses. None of his siblings offered to help pay for anything. The only inheritance Papa received was an old pocket knife, pocket watch and the

family dinner bell. Mabel found out that Papa had received these items and she came to his house and demanded the items. Papa was not at home at the time. So, Granny handled the situation by saying, "May Bell, get out of this house."

The two women had not spoken for 10 or 11 months when the cotton crop demanded attention. Mabel needed Granny's help and Granny needed Mabel's help. So, first Granny helped Mabel get her crop laid by. The next day Mabel's car wouldn't start so Granny went to get her in the old 1957 Chevy step side pick-up. As they drove down the gravel road they rounded a curve. Mabel's door flew open and dumped her out of the truck onto the road. Granny slammed on the brakes and rushed to Aunt Mabel's side. Granny asked, "Mabel are you okay?" Mabel looked up at Granny and began to rant and rave. She accused Granny of slinging her out of the truck on purpose on account of what had happened about the pocket knife, bell and watch.

Granny said, "May Bell, get up from there I am taking you home." And the feud continued for a couple more years.

Later on after the feud had subsided, Union Hill Church decided to build a new church.

Aunt Mabel and Granny were right in the thick of things. Granny would cook lunch and supper for the workers.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

As the last few hours of 2013 wind down, I am grateful this year that the spirit of Thanksgiving in my family has survived all the holidays. The holiday season is fundamentally about gratitude. We are, or we can choose to be, grateful for family and friends, for salvation, for tradition, or even just thankful for a few days off from work. Yet every year gratitude contends with other forces: expectation, guilt, traffic and sticker shock. We might find ourselves quite willing to trade all the shopping, traveling, cooking and cleaning for a day or two at home with nothing on the to-do list.

Today is such a day at my own home, and I am eternally grateful for the privilege of being here after spending so much of 2013 away. The mist on the mountains is gorgeous this morning. The wind in the trees is bracing. The birds are celebrating the feeders we filled yesterday. Gone are the noises of the city: the leaf blowers at 7AM; the garbage truck at 6, the hiss of traffic in the distance and the yowl of the siren heading for another accident, another fire or another shooting.

The water at home tastes like water, quite unlike the swimming-pool-flavored swill from the city tap. The air at home is sweet and alive and it does not settle out into a sticky brown film that coats everything with grunge. The

sky at night glows with stars instead of street lights.

Yesterday we enjoyed a quiet drive into town for a movie and we did not have to fight traffic or stand in line for a ticket. We ate at a nice restaurant and did not have to take out a loan to pay for dinner. We saw people we knew and had time for conversations, and not a single one of them was interrupted by a text or a post.

We are blessed to live here, where we do and how we do. Granted, we have our problems, like any other collection of humanity. It has been a bumpy ride for some of us, the transition from a rural farming economy to one sustained by housing and now perhaps more towards an economy grown from retirement and senior care.

But we endure in our odd mixture of people, lifestyles and viewpoints. If we were a dog, we would be a mutt, and mutts make the best companions. Like a mutt, from certain angles we are butt ugly and chaotic while in a different light we are cute and endearing and quite often beautiful.

I wouldn't trade our home here in the mountains for any other place. I'm grateful for my friends and neighbors, and for the loyal group of readers here who endure these weekly discussions. I wish all of you peace and prosperity in the New Year.



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Between the time our kids enter grade one and the time they graduate from high school and head off to college (or wherever), we have them for a total of 624 weeks. Subtracting summer camps, field trips, visits to grandma's house, sleep-overs, and other unpredictable events leaves us with about 600 weeks. That's all.

But here's the environment in which we're parenting: Not long ago Fox News headlined a story that said, "FBI Probing 530 Corporate Fraud Cases." Wouldn't it be great if instead, the headline read something about the titans of corporate America stepping up and saying to our generation, "We may not always make the smartest business decisions, but you can be sure those decisions will be impeccably honest and as transparent as sunlight?" In today's culture that's a more improbable dream than picking a winning fantasy football team.

But here's the deal: As a leadership parent, part of my moral mandate is to help coach a new generation to that kind of non-negotiable moral integrity. I call it Parenting Kids Who Glow In the Dark - seeking to develop kids whose characters glow with integrity in a culture steeped in darkness.

That describes parents who are pretty intentional

about character building. So let me ask you a couple of questions: What are you reading with your kids? What worthwhile videos are you watching together and then discussing? What moral issues in the news are you helping them observe and explore? What involvement with church or synagogue are you building into their schedule? What personal example are you setting?

The temptation is to concentrate on short-term stuff... a good grade on Friday's spelling test; make sure they get to soccer practice on time; brush their teeth after dinner. Those are valuable, but the big picture is this: We're not really raising children, we're raising adults. Whenever I ask a roomful of parents what they want their kids to be like in 25 years, I not once do they tell me, "I want him to be a good speller, be able to hit a softball out of the park, and have shiny teeth."

Rather, they talk about their having integrity, compassion, a spirit of service, unselfish. So we've got 600 weeks to get to them with the big stuff...to take the long look; to help polish, not just their skills and their teeth, but more importantly, their characters. What's your plan?

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.



"You've only got 365 of them, kid. So don't waste any!"

And Aunt Mabel was helping the men build the church. After the building was constructed Aunt Mabel took it upon herself to paint a mural on the wall above the baptismal pool. The mural portrayed the baptism of Jesus. It was beautiful. Everyone was so pleased with the painting, Granny was especially proud of Mabel's efforts. She called us in Georgia and said, "You must come home and see Sirendy's painting."

Granny called Mabel by different names depending on their relationship at the time. But, in the end two women still loved and depended on one another.

GUEST COLUMNS
From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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