

SUCCESS – GUIDES OWN

Performed by Sarah Ward for Scroggin' 2007 Qld Outdoor Conference.

As Guide Leaders we always encourage girls to set goals. This weekend it was our turn to set goals - outdoor goals we at which we wanted to succeed. Any goal setting workshop will tell you that your goal has to be concrete but how many of us simply set success as our goal, without any idea of what 'success' is. Some of us will have achieved our goals, some 'failed' and no doubt some of us are disappointed that we didn't have the courage to set our goals high enough. I guess like hot and cold we could imagine success in terms of opposites – failure is the opposite of success – but now we have to think not only what success is but also what failure is. I would like you to hold this thought as I share with you my story and my box of treasures.

A little while ago I set a goal, which admittedly was a little way out of my comfort zone. It did not happen – I 'failed' spectacularly. Feeling rather small I went off to lick my wounds and indulge in a large dose of self-pity. While I was feeling really bad, I decided to look in my treasure box. What is in my treasure box – just inspirational or interesting sayings, poems, and stories. This was the first piece of paper I pulled out it was a piece by the famous philosopher:

Rene Descartes

But I have convinced myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies. Does it now follow that I too do not exist? No: if I convinced myself of something (or thought anything at all) then I certainly existed. So after considering everything very thoroughly, I must finally conclude the proposition – I think, therefore I am.

This wasn't the inspiration I was hoping for, but it did give me hope in that whilst he thought everything was nothing – I wasn't. "I Think ...Therefore I Am." This little piece of wisdom actually had a lot more to do with it than I thought – as you too will understand at the end of my story.

I reached into my treasure box again and this was the next piece of paper – I have made a copy for you all

First verse of poem

Everybody Knows:

You can't be all things to all people.

You can't do all things at once.

You can't do all things equally well.

You can't do all things better than everyone else.

Your humanity is showing just like everyone else's.



That was pretty much what I thought anyway – not much inspiration there!

It was then that my mother dropped in – God Bless mothers! I told her my whole sorry story and she asked me to hang in there – she'd return with a poem that she'd always found useful. Sure enough she dropped by – with a ton of home-made biscuits! – and this poem.

Failure (Unknown author)

Failure doesn't mean you are a failure... it does mean you haven't succeeded yet.

Failure doesn't mean you have accomplished nothing... it does mean you have learned something.

Failure doesn't mean you have been a fool ... it does mean you had a lot of faith.

Failure doesn't mean you've been disgraced ... it does mean you were willing to try.

Failure doesn't mean you don't have it ... it does mean you have to do something in a different way
Failure doesn't mean you are inferior ... it does mean you are not perfect.
Failure doesn't mean you've wasted your life ... it does mean you have a reason to start afresh.
Failure doesn't mean you should give up ... it does mean you must try harder.
Failure doesn't mean you'll never make it ... it does mean It wig take a little longer.
Failure doesn't mean God has abandoned you ... It does mean God has a better idea!

That did give me a little more encouragement and in a strange co-incidence as though another was talking, went with the next piece I pulled out:

Don't Quit

*When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging seems all uphill,
When the 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 every one of us sometime 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 might succeed with another blow...*

*Success is failure turned inside out
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt
And you can never tell how close you are.
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you are hardest hit
It's when things get worse that you mustn't quit.*

O.K. I still wasn't feeling great – I needed yet more inspiration – I stirred the box hoping to win a raffle, and pulled out another piece I have also copied for you all

Second verse of poem

*So:
You have to find out who you are, and be that.
You have to decide what comes first, and do that.
You have to discover your strengths, and use them.
You have to learn not to compete with others,
Because no one else is in the contest of *being you*.*

A good piece of wisdom no doubt, but not exactly the pick-me-up I was needing. Just then the phone rang – I was tempted to ignore it – lost in my own self-pity and truly thinking that I was just too useless for anyone to really want to talk to me so it surely would be one of those foreign salespeople who I



wouldn't understand anyway. Training overcame all (my mother would have a fit if I didn't answer the phone – it could be that urgent call telling me some important family news!) so I answered it. It was a friend who had been reading a magazine and knowing my passion for inspirational stories had found one for my collection. It was so good, she said, she wanted to read it to me over the phone and she'd drop a copy by later. This was that story.

The Daffodil Principle

Several times my daughter had telephoned to say, "Mother, you must come see the daffodils before they are over." I wanted to go, but it was a two-hour drive from Laguna to Lake Arrowhead.

"I will come next Tuesday," I promised, a little reluctantly, on her third call.

Next Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, I had promised, and so I drove there. When I finally walked into Carolyn's house and hugged and greeted my grandchildren, I said, "Forget the daffodils, Carolyn! The road is invisible in the clouds and fog, and there is nothing in the world except you and these children that I want to see bad enough to drive another inch!"

My daughter smiled calmly and said, "We drive in this all the time, Mother."

"Well, you won't get me back on the road until it clears, and then I'm heading for home!" I assured her.

"I was hoping you'd take me over to the garage to pick up my car."

"How far will we have to drive?"

"Just a few blocks," Carolyn said. "I'll drive. I'm used to this."

After several minutes, I had to ask, "Where are we going? This isn't the way to the garage!"

"We're going to my garage the long way," Carolyn smiled, "by way of the daffodils."

"Carolyn," I said sternly, "please turn around."

"It's all right, Mother, I promise. You will never forgive yourself if you miss this experience."

After about twenty minutes, we turned onto a small gravel road and I saw a small church. On the far side of the church, I saw a hand-lettered sign that said, "Daffodil Garden."

We got out of the car and each took a child's hand, and I followed Carolyn down the path. Then, we turned a corner of the path, and I looked up and gasped. Before me lay the most glorious sight. It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it down over the mountain peak and slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns—great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, saffron, and butter yellow. Each different-colored variety was planted as a group so that it swirled and flowed like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers.

"But who has done this?" I asked Carolyn.

"It's just one woman," Carolyn answered. "She lives on the property. That's her home."

Carolyn pointed to a well kept A-frame house that looked small and modest in the midst of all that glory. We walked up to the house. On the patio, we saw a poster. "Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Asking" was the headline.

The first answer was a simple one. "50,000 bulbs," it read. The second answer was, "One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet, and very little brain." The third answer was, "Began in 1958."

There it was, The Daffodil Principle. For me, that moment was a life-changing experience. I thought of this woman whom I had never met, who, more than forty years before, had begun ~ one bulb at a time ~ to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountain top. Still, just planting one bulb at a time, year after year, had changed the world. This unknown woman had forever changed the world in which she lived. She had created something of ineffable (indescribable) magnificence, beauty, and inspiration. The principle her daffodil garden taught is one of the greatest principles of celebration. That is, learning

to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time ~ often just one baby-step at a time ~ and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time. When we multiply tiny pieces of time with small increments of daily effort, we too will find we can accomplish magnificent things. We can change the world.

"It makes me sad in a way," I admitted to Carolyn. "What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal thirty-five or forty years ago and had worked away at it 'one bulb at a time' through all those years. Just think what I might have been able to achieve!"

My daughter summed up the message of the day in her usual direct way. "Start tomorrow," she said.

Wow! That was inspirational but my dose of self-pity still hadn't left me and I wasn't cheered quite yet. I fished in my box for another big catch – again I have a copy for all of you

Third verse of poem

Then:

You will have learned to accept your own uniqueness.

You will have learned to set priorities and make decisions.

You will have learned to live with your limitations.

You will have learned to give yourself the respect that is due.

And you'll be a most vital mortal.



Yeah – that was right – but I still wasn't feeling quite that “vital mortal”. At this point in time I marched my daughter and again it made me feel better to share my sorry story – at least someone else could feel sorry for me, other than just me, was my thinking. “Ah,” she said “I have just the thing.” And raced out of the room, returning a few minutes later waving a piece of paper triumphantly in her hand. She pushed it in front of my nose – it was an old Chinese Fable.

Chinese Fable

Author unknown

A water bearer in China had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One pot had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After 2 years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I'm ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side?"

That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path ... Every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty in my house." Moral;

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them.



I greedily consulted the box again.

Always Aim Higher (Edmund O'Neill)

Always aim higher than you believe you can reach. So often, you'll discover that when your talents are set free by your imagination, you can achieve any goal.

If people offer their help or wisdom as you go through life, accept it gratefully. You can learn much from those who have gone before you. But never be afraid or hesitant to step off the accepted path and head off in your own direction if your heart tells you that it's the right way for you.

Always believe that you will ultimately succeed at whatever you do, and never forget the value of persistence, discipline, and determination.

You are meant to be whatever you dream of becoming.

Still not satisfied I put both hands in, stirring passionately then drew out this – I copied this for you all too

Fourth verse of poem

Dare To Believe:

That you are a wonderful, unique person.

That you are a once-in-all-history event.

That it's more than a right, it's your duty, to be who you are.

That life is not a problem to solve, but a gift to cherish.

And you'll be able to stay one up on what used to get you down

(Steps to Happiness, Author Unknown)

Now I realized the wisdom of that little saying of Rene Descarte – although I am sure he didn't see this particular use of his saying – adding the following words to his I came up with: I think success ...

Therefore I am successful. It works with any words.

Just for good measure I thought I'd consult the treasure box for one final piece of wisdom – something that would just lift me high enough to fly again.

To Laugh Often

To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others. to leave the world a bit better. whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or redeemed social condition, to know that one life has breathed easier because you have lived, This is to have succeeded. - Ralph Waldo Emerson.