

**The Worst of  
Times  
The Best of  
Times**

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**By**

**Misheck Moyo**



# **The Worst of Times, The Best of Times:**

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# **DEDICATION**

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To the readers of this book: All who have gone through the worst of times and have violently woven their way out and marched emphatically to landslide victory.

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# BEST OF OPPORTUNITIES IN TRAGEDIES

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## Chapter One

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Since time immemorial, man has always faced seemingly insurmountable mountains, some of them spelling death but, let me at this juncture, categorically state that the worst of times in your life are your best of times! The worst of times is an expedition in exploration of the other self in you. They are the times that will never depart from your memory. The worst of times stab you with a wake up spear and activate the power and might in you and give birth to a lion lying idle in every-one of us. God created man with immense power and ability to do anything he wants but, most of the power and immeasurable ability of mankind lies inactive in him, waiting for activation. Troubles and tragedies are there to crank the machine that is in a lull in you and give it a wakeup cough. Revolutions have erupted all over the world since pre-historic times whenever men found themselves in the hands of insensitive, cruel and demagogic monarchs. Those nasty times begat revolutions. The revolutions begat democracies. The democracies brought happiness to the masses. The democracies brought development and the enlightenment of mankind and more production.

Dr. Robert Schuller, a celebrated man the world-over, once said, *“Tough times never last, but tough people do.”* Those words were said from the abysses of immense wisdom and are worth ounces of gold! If you meet with calamity like most people have done, or you soon fall into, tell yourself that *beyond the dark clouds, sunshine abounds and also know that no matter the length of the night, it will end with dawn,* and automatically, teach yourself to cultivate a culture of seeing success

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in your mind beyond that calamity, first, before you see success manifest physically. Success and failure happen in the mind first. The two worlds of success and failure are simply a state of the mind. If your mind is heavily inclined towards success, you will succeed despite the belligerency of the tragedy you are facing. If your mind is heavily inclined towards failure, you will fail despite the number of chances for success you will encounter.

You will never see success over the worst of times unless you see it in your mind, first. When you meet with calamity, be still, and thank God for its happening. If you are clever, no calamity will ever leave you the same. It will catapult you to higher echelons of success in life, but, if you don't decode the tragedy properly, by seeing the silver lining skirting around it, you will go down under together with the calamity. All heroes are heroes because they met with tragedy, and they rose up, and clothed themselves in the right armour for battle. Like Samson of the Bible, they tore the lions that wanted to decimate them into myriads of pieces before the lions tore them apart. This world is an unkind world. Every calamity calls for unforgiving ruthlessness to deal with it. But, let it be known to you, calamity has given the world its heroes. You cannot be a hero for having achieved nothing. A hero is a victor who fights something and conquers it over.

When the lions of tragedy roar insidiously in your life seeking for a chance to swallow you, fear not. Take heart. Fear must fear you instead! Instead, smile and give praise to the Lord, your hour of notice has come. Fear is an illusion that exists in the mind that you will not be able to do it. Fear has robbed this world of great gifts. Fear has sent men and women into the grave with great potentials. Great advice was buried unsaid due to fear. Great words went back into the ground unsaid due to fear. Great plans were not brought into manifestation due to fear of failure. Fear, is the foe's most powerful weapon that will paralyse your whole problem-solving

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ability and leave you clueless and vulnerable to any vagaries and vicissitudes of life. Life is like a roller-coaster-oscillation: with the tongue of the pendulum of life always moving between the worst of times and the best of times. Fear, if unchecked, will see you speak when you are not supposed to speak. It can see you keeping quiet when you should be talking.

Therefore, the licking of the tongue of life into the abysses of the worst of times is not a tragedy. Real tragedy happens when the pendulum of life licks the worst of times and leaves you there for years on end, until eventually, you pass to the world of the silent. There is no problem with the pendulum of life dropping you at the whims of the worst of times and leaving you there. Catch it the next time the bob of the pendulum hovers around your head. It must, this time, go and drop you to the other end of life-the best of times. Right in the midst of the worst of times, where the pendulum left you at its first swing, begin entertaining victorious thoughts whilst you are there in the dungeons of calamities. Those victorious thoughts will allow you to catch it the next time around. Otherwise, if keep yourself engrossed in the negatives of the calamity, you may not notice the pendulum of change as it swings in your face seeking to rescue you.

Have you ever observed the famed Jamaican sportsman, Usain Bolt, the world-record holder sprinter, taking to the race in style, his face beaming with untold confidence and immense zeal to come tops, always. He waves his hands victoriously well before take-off. His opponents watch him in awe as they admire him display his sporting shenanigans. The confident swinging of hands and displaying of cavalcades of muscles on his shoulders and thighs lined up ready for execution, on its own, instils fear into his opponents at the same time swelling up his confidence levels, and his enemies face with tremors of fear at his sight. All his opponents race against him with the sole aim of beating him in the race. But, he is no push-over! His

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showcasing of his muscular prowess to his opponents fills them with an inferiority complex that keeps them down under.

Well before the race starts, Usain wins the race psychologically and his opponents inversely surrender psychologically, before the race even starts. When the whistle blows off, his psychological competitive advantage catapults him to victory and his opponents, with their psychological disadvantage, trail behind him lugubriously. When you get into the worst of times, fill your worst of times with an inferiority complex before they do that to you. And, see what Usain Bolt does when he takes-off! He springs forward like a lion ready for the unforgiving, never missing a kill for an evening meal. That is the attitude to be embraced when faced with what seems like insurmountable mountains before you, which, if poorly handled, will see you go down the drain of failure and death. That should never happen to you, child of the Most High. You are a lion, endowed with special features and abilities to kill and devour your enemies.

Pluck a leaf out of Usain Bolt's victorious hand-swinging confidence-instilling exercise. Behave like him. Swing your hands victoriously while your worst of times think they are at their height in pressing you down. That will dilute and paralyse the vitriol embedded in your worst of times. Count yourself a victor like young David before the feared giant Goliath, whom he told, squarely on his face, *"Today the Lord will help me defeat you. I will knock you down and cut off your head, and I'll feed the bodies of the other Philistine soldiers to the birds and wild animals."* 1 Samuel 17:46.

What a great measure of faith and proper attitude to send tragedy off-packing to where it belongs, from juvenile David! The young David's attitude is the correct attitude and armour needed when tragedy strikes its hammer onto your head in your times, with the crux of trying to pull you down. Tell it, flat on its face, that you will defeat it with no apology and make an evening meal out of it. Tragedy

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requires playing hard ball against it. An angel of the Lord renamed Jacob “*Israel*” after a gruelling struggle with the angel all night long and Jacob wouldn’t let go of the angel until it blessed him. Your blessings will not come so easily to you. You have to give a telling fight with your tragedies until you get out of them. They must find you hot to handle. They may injure you like Jacob, but, hold on, by the break of dawn, you will get your blessings.

Jacob’s mind was milling about what had happened between him and his brother. He was deep in thought and yearned for the Lord to bless him, but the coming of the deeply required blessing was no mean feat. Genesis 32: 28, “*And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast thou prevailed.*” He was bestowed with a blessing that transcends generations upon generations into everlasting but, after a record fight with an angel! Israelites are a blessed lot of people. They command tremendous wealth under the sun. They command immense intelligentsia under the sun. It all emanates from Jacob’s fight with the angel. He becomes their ancestor in wealth and power. Angels possess gargantuan power that no human can ever give a fight at them. Who among us can fight an angel with all its mighty power and dazzle away with a new name? A name that will bless generations upon generations until the sun covers its face at the end of times. That can only indicate to us the scale of the fight Jacob displayed that record night. You hear the angel yell to him, “*Let go of me! It’s almost daylight.*” Jacob really deserves the change of name to “*Israel*,” which means a victor. When you meet with tragedy, God does not want you to easily march out of it without giving a spirited fight and plucking important notes from it. Those important notes are your testimony. They are your history. Your testimony glorifies the name of the Almighty and proves the mettle you are made of.

While Jacob faced a dreary, uncertain future emanating from his tricking of his brother Esau, he dearly needed the pendulum of life

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to carry him to the other end filled to elasticity with happiness. His migration to the best of times needed gargantuan effort against the dreary of times. After his gargantuan effort against the odds of life, the pendulum of life came and hovered above his head and he precariously hung onto it, by fighting with the angel. His fight was huge. When the pendulum of life carried him again on its wings to the best of times, after a bruising fight all night long, it smiled at him and said, in galore of blessings, *“Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast thou prevailed.”*

God desires that we don't sink with troubles, but, come out victors from every unseeming situation. If you meet with calamity and God helps you out, you will bear witness unto his goodness. Bearing witness unto the good of the Lord pleases Him so much. Goliath, the Biblical giant, initially laughed and scorned at young and seemingly feeble David's words directed at him, only to reminiscent of them as he tumbled down to the ground with accelerated momentum. If you have faith like that of the lad David, your worst of times, your Goliaths in life, will tumble down with acceleration when you proclaim yourself, in your own words, with your own mouth, a victor in the hand of the Creator God. Victory comes to those who are victory conscious. If you are defeat conscious, you will meet with defeat. Goliath will make you and your nation their slaves forever if you carry the defeat mentality with you. Welcome the coming of the worst of times into your life. After the season of trouble ends, you will soar like an eagle into the skies of success and landslide victories.

As David said the record victory inclined words to Goliath, with no iota of doubt in the ability of the Creator God to deliver that which he wanted, the unseen forces of the heavens lined themselves up for battle according to his command, and stood by and with him, and fulfilled his wish. Jesus strongly emphasised that everything is



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possible if you believe, “*Anything is possible for someone who has faith.*” Mark 9: 23. As long as you believe that you can, then you can move easily out of your worst of times. Moving out of the worst of times or staying in them forever is a state of the mind. The statement above by Jesus Christ will make you disagree with your worst of times, that always desire to instil fear into you and try to contain you. Let a heated argument between you and your worst of times start right now! The worst of times cannot chain you for good. Stir a revolution against your worst of times, now. If you don’t stir one, the worst of your times will leave you wallowing in mediocrity, poverty, disease and failure. You are fired up now, start the revolution. When Jonah was fired up in the belly of the big fish, the big fish could not contain him anymore! Your worst of times must vomit you now on dry land. The dry land is the beginning of your best of times.

The immense power in man is like an inactive atomic bomb. It lies idle and useless as long as it is not activated. Ignite the ingredients inside it and see what happens! That is what the best of times do. They make you idle and inactive, yet the potential in you screams for igniting. To ignite the hydrogen bomb, some chemicals have to squeeze against each other and start a fire. Now, the worst of times have come to activate you like a hydrogen bomb. They have come to squeeze you. When you are squeezed you will let out the sweet juice necessary for the growth of humanity. That is the purpose of the worst of times on you. They ignite the ingredients inside you. When you ignite an atomic bomb, you have galvanised ruthless atomic activity in a flash and the world boils, and turns into topsyturvity, all at once! The atomic bombs that were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan were just like ordinary parachutes as they floated in mid-air but, converging in them, without people’s knowledge, were evil gamma-rays, ready to carry the Devil’s advocacy. Check your history books to see what happened as the “parachutes” floated in mid-air, some people gazed at them in awe!

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What happened in Hiroshima some few minutes down the line, the effect needs hundreds of years to clear from the Japanese soil. Hiroshima and Nagasaki went into higgledy-piggledy at the very moment, boiling into molten lava. Emperor Hirohito described the bomb that devastated Hiroshima in six words only, "*A New and Most Cruel Bomb.*" You are no different from that atomic bomb. You have been ruffled your feathers by your worst of times. When troubles ruffle you, you will be like that atomic bomb. Gather the gamma-rays and explode in the midst of your worst of times and ramshackle them. Let the worst of your times boil, instead, not you. People and your worst of times will describe you as "cruel" when you start working ruthlessly to achieve your dreams despite the worst of times around you, which you seek to destroy, to the limits.

Problems, as much as mankind hates them, come, uninvited and they come to instruct. They come to hone your skills in problem solving: in solving the issues attendant to your worst of times. It is during such dark times that man, by mistake, tends to bump onto another different, unknown person lying idle in the person mankind has known before. After man has been grilled in the furnace of trouble, a different person, resurrects into life, from the person we have known before. A new person with a vision and purpose of life comes into life, yet the former person was docile and devoid of vision. A new person, who can be controlled by the Spirit of God to achieve things beyond human measure, roars like a lion into life and achieves what seemed unachievable at first.

The worst of times are God's best times to send His Spirit upon you. Pain forces man to quickly listen to what nature demands of him. Most of the world's finest visions cropped out of mountains of problems. The problems created the need. The need created huge visions. The huge visions resulted in massive actions. The massive actions gave the world what the world is today. It is during those dark, demanding, life-threatening moments that the Spirit of God

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grabs man, imparts him with a troublesome vision to solve a threatening problem. The seed to that vision is the problem that has been sent to you. When the seed has been sent to you, be the good soil that will convert the seed into a new green shoot that will bring out more fruits.

Great civilisations sprang out of precarious problems that nearly wiped away entire nations. The invention of the *shaduf* in the ancient world along the Nile Valley in Egypt stemmed from a great need for massive, quicker water movement, otherwise, the desert had abruptly failed to support the nations with food, threatening the whole nations with demise. Great civilisations cropped up in China, Greece and everywhere else from pestering problems. Enemies were threatening with raids and looting of every form of wealth, and invading the nation and snatching away its independence. Enslavement was disastrous to any nation and people fought their all out to avoid it. Then the problems led to technological developments. Technology led to better means of production and better use of tools to men's advancement. In most cases, the worst of times will teach you to maximise on the use of available resources, otherwise resources could be used to men's disadvantage.

Some twenty years ago, monstrous China was just a Mr Nobody from Nowhere. Its economy was lagging behind all major economies of the world. China was a little boy in khaki shorts. It was classified as a third-world country. It was their worst of times. But, the worst of times shook the sleeping giant from slumbers, and the dragon roared and churned into life. The Chinese took self- introspection and carried out a serious root-cause analyses of their lagging behind to other nations, economically. They realised they had vast resources in their midst which were lying idle and untapped. They realised they were sitting on vast mountains which they could profitably be put to use. They realised they had great people among them who profitably worked for the good of China and themselves. Today, China is a

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giant model, being envied by all nations and now it stands neck-to-neck with the super-rich USA. No country can afford to ignore China anymore. Those who do so, do so at their own peril. Its economic and cultural tentacles are spreading everywhere. The once economic giants are crying foul as China ruthlessly grabs all business markets the world-over.

Today, everywhere under the sun, there are Chinese products ranging from the most sophisticated to the simplest. The world sales market share has violently been grabbed by the Chinese. China is a model for all in their worst of times. Like them, if you expend your energy on your vision and intently focus on it, you will soon give the world your own testament of how you shook the vampire of bad times out of your life. I reiterate: If you meet with bad times, embrace them and look for the silver lining in them. There are no bad times without wonderful, beneficial lessons from them. That is the silver lining in every cloud. When you reflect on them later on, you will see how glorious those bad times were. It is those bad times that beget big visions. Visions that can shake the world.

Once the Spirit of God violently grabs man, whilst he reels under a problem, he can do supernatural things! Challenges are great opportunities, my brother! Everything around you is of great value. Give it a golden touch and see what happens. The Chinese converted useless mountains into multi-billion dollars ventures. They harnessed the wind and the solar power into great money spinners. Even feathers are valuable possessions in China. Everything around you is valuable. Turn it over and see how you have been sitting on money yet you cried day and night of being besieged by poverty. Greece is harnessing the winds from the Mediterranean Sea and profiting from it. Wind farms are everywhere in Greece. The need to convert winds into multi-billion dollar businesses arose from straining energy requirements. Convert everything around you into something profitable. What are you doing with your good eyesight? What are

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you doing with your sharp mind? What are you doing with your great voice? What are you doing with your piece of land? What are you doing with that rubbish pit? Israel is a desert. But, you find the best agriculture in the world in desert Israel, yet those with the best of soils look up in awe at them. They have tamed the hostile deserts into green-fields. The unfriendly desert is now the home of green revolutions. My mate, stand up now, look around and be of immense value to mankind. Your time allocation under the sun is wasting away yet you invest in unprofitable ventures. Do your best in the days of your life. You have just but one life under the sun.

Africa, yours is not a gloomy picture. Never. Never! You have wasted valuable time engaged in tears. Cry no more my motherland. Your hour of waging a revolution against mediocrity, poverty, disease and failure has come. Legend has it that one day the late great British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was invited to give a special speech at his former school. He stood up amid great expectations by the audience of a great speech by their own child who had become the Prime Minister. They expected him to take his time praising this and that, looking at changes that had taken place since he left that school, during his speech. Contrarily, when he gave his speech he simply said, "Never, ever give up!" and sat down, having wrapped it up. That was his speech. While people expected more from him, he was done and seated already. But, the words he said in a short sentence were worth tons and tons of gold. Africa, you have been called Third-World. You have been called a Dark Continent. You have been called all sorts of names. That, is all meant to belittle you. Don't worry about that anymore. Those words are not disappointing words, they don't carry any sting with them but they are the sweetest music to your ears! Those words are meant to awaken you from deep slumbers and follow those who have awoken from deep slumbers already. Grab the words, kiss them good and prove yourself very different from the derogatory statements.

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Your precious resources have been wantonly plundered by invaders. Don't cry anymore about that. Worry is like a rocking chair. It will keep you in motion but never take you anywhere. It's all in the past and what's required now is mapping a strategy to move forward, profitably, with value addition on every one of your products. The statement "Dark Continent" is meant to stand before you as a biblical Goliath, imparting you with fear that paralyses your way of thinking. Face that scornful statement with the David mentality. *"Today the Lord will help me defeat you. I will knock you down and cut off your head, and I'll feed the bodies of the other Philistine soldiers to the birds and wild animals."* 1 Samuel 17:46. Surely, Africa, you can defeat all the Goliaths in your midst. Poverty, disease, mediocrity and backwardness must hear those words directly from your mouth, Africa and shiver like reeds in torrential waters before you Africa, The Great Giant. You need to cut-off the head of poverty like the head of Goliath. Africa, you have vast resources to do that assignment to a wonderful conclusion!

Human needs create God's opportunity to bless them. That time when you painfully work through your dark times, working above your head to turn them into light. It is the moment when you experience a miracle, your own miracle in your lifetime, a turning point in your life. After going through a problem, the best in you, hidden for too long will be squeezed out like juice from an orange which comes out through squeezing. The world's greatest visionaries bear great testimonies of the hardest times in their lives, at one time or the other. When you face the worst of times, your testimony is just by the corner. Your writer spilled the pain of being rejected by his lover through the sting of the pen. When he was comfortable in his marriage, he was like a docile lamb but when pain poked him, another person he had never known before, sprung up from him and roared into life with dazzling writings. Today, the world labels him a great writer. He thanks his worst of times for awakening the other person in him.

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He started writing to dilute the fangs of pain that had accumulated in his heart! Today, like he did when in the epicentre of his problems, he praises God for entangling him with that problem which led him into discovering his inner-self. He also never knew that there was a great writer in him, who would bless the world richly like that through the vomit of a pen. Read the results of his handiwork: *Light Out of Darkness; Spiritual Apprenticeship for Wealth Creation; The Fangs of Love; The Greedy Pastor, Memoirs of a writer, Vowing Vows* and many more from his vivacious hand. You will see what a man does when he bumps, by means of being induced to pain, onto his natural talent! You will never be the same after reading the results of his handiwork! The lion in you, will shun dosing, forever and profit this planet!

The greatest tragedy with man is his inability to face the mean times and come out victorious. The greatest tragedy is not falling down but failing to rise after a fall! Man gets overwhelmed by challenges at hand, fail to realise that bad times are the fertile ground for strengthening faith and sharpening the vision. At first, a vision may be hazy and lack the impetus to galvanise the owner into meaningful action. That weak vision gets horned through challenges. At times, after a close shave with troubles, a whole new, more meaningful vision may stem from the calamity. That tried and tested vision can endure any pressure and it can see the break of dawn and take you to dizzy heights. Those at the top are not there by chance. They have endured the worst of times. They were at one time arrested. They were rejected. They were called lunatics. All that was oil needed to oil their machines for the onerous tasks of going up-hill.

Many people in Southern Africa vividly remember Cecil John Rhodes who arrived at Kimberly as a mere youth. He had left his native land, Britain, in quest of good health. Legend says when he landed in South Africa, he was a shy, unpromising youth. He was constantly sick, always falling victim to malaria and never showed any signs of a sleeping giant in him in the early years. He took the

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misfortune that weaned him from his parents and instead of crying of being away from home, he turned that weaning into his own advantage, and started dreaming wildly of amassing all the lands between the Cape and Cairo. His dream was no mean feat and it was not in vain. The dream made him cold, sleepless and wild. Legend has it that one day, he woke up in the midst of the night as stars laughed their way across the sky in their uncountable constellations and proclaimed how lucky he was to be born British and to belong to the finest flower of civilisation!

He was not in the comfort of his native land, but he felt proud to be of British extraction. That serves to say be proud of whoever you are. He was surrounded by unforgivingly biting mosquitoes as that wild dream kept him awake all day and night long. Their sting reminded him of his wild dream, always. He never kept his focus away from it. De Beers, a diamond conglomerate was born in those years in the midst of much discomfort. I always say comfort is uncomfortable. Today, De Beers controls diamond sales the world-over! He created several colonies for the Queen of England from the Cape to Cairo while those of his times, who were better positioned, who remained comfortable in England and the USA crossed the river of life into obscurity without anyone taking note of them. But, a sick young boy, pushed out of the hands of comfort by disease, did it. By the time he died, the globe knew him very well. He was a sung hero everywhere he went. Always seek for opportunity in every calamity. Your worst of times are your best of times, I tell you. They carry the seed for your heroism.

World celebrity Walt Disney arrived in Hollywood in 1923 with a saving of usd40.00 only in his pocket. His was a rags-to-riches life. He never had a toy in his childhood, but in his mind he had so many toys which he played with psychologically only, much more than all the children who had toys around them. Walt was a dreamer from early life. While other children of his age were busy playing, he was



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busy running errands of delivering journals and newspapers. In his childhood, Walt was deprived of many of the comforts of early life. Beatings from his father were too common to him. That bad start to life taught him creativity through art, though his father never encouraged him to take art, but he persisted. He could express himself through art, better than anything else. Walt was a big dreamer. That deprivation, that unsatisfied desire to hold a toy during the worst of times in his childhood, gave the world Micky Mouse, a character he created as he sought to fulfil his childhood dream of playing with various kinds of toys.

“Dream, diversify and never miss an angle” was his motto. He was wild with his motto, and drilled it hard down on his employees. When he was advised to exercise to improve his health, he wake up at 0430hrs, exercise early in the morning and be in the office by 0700hrs. He just did the exercising to get it out of his way. What he could not get out of his way was his dream, a shaking dream! A dream that troubled him every moment of his life! A dream that had been coined from early childhood deprivation, was hung onto a paltry usd40.00 saving. The pulse from a dream stemming from childhood deprivation took the film industry by storm! The world marvelled at the work of his handiwork. Those times, when he was deprived of laying his hands on toys in his childhood, were his worst of times but, he grabbed them by the horn and coined a dream out of it: a dream whose evidence is in your house to this day and will never go away. Tune in to any cartoon channel and see the result of his dream. He did not dream in vain. Do like him, my brother, turn those dreary days into something beneficial to the world! Your worst of times carry with them your honour and your million dollars!

When he died in 1966, the whole world knew about Mickey Mouse, a character he created. The deprivation and the paltry usd40.00 saving had grown like a tree over the years to dizzy heights, and had achieved this for him:

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*240 million people saw a Disney film.*

*100 million people saw a Disney TV show weekly*

*800 million people read a Disney book or magazine*

*50 million people listened to a Disney record*

*80 million people bought Disney licensed merchandise*

*150 million people read a Disney comic strip*

*80 million people saw a Disney educational film*

*6, 7 million people visited Disneyland*

Walt demonstrated to the world how to turn the nasty situations of life into the best of times. His lack of childhood toys led him to inventing a new world, a world of Micky Mouse. A world of cartoons. In his quest to fulfil that desire, he created Disneyland. He left a smile on everyone's face: young or old, rich or poor. His cartoons, up to this day, soothe the heavily burdened in this world. The young and old love them dearly to this day.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, better known as Mahatma Gandhi was saintly and simple but a strong willed patriot who wielded a new formidable weapon against British rule in India. His destructive tool was called, "passive non-cooperation." This simple tool disarmed the heaviest of weapons in its days. Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869 in the Indian state of Kathiawar in North-West India. He was brought up in a respectable Hindu family and studied law in England becoming a barrister in 1891. He led a normal life working as a barrister, until he went to ply his trade in South Africa. South Africa

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was his turning point. Severe racial segregation gnawed on him, for the first time, in South Africa. He was shocked lock, stock and barrel to realise that as a coloured person there were places he could not visit! There were railway compartments he could not travel in and he was to carry his identification particulars with him everywhere. He was entangled in what he had never dreamt of. That demeaning situation handed him, thereat, a vision that would shake the world and galvanise India into a revolution!

Religion had taught him non-violence and in line with that, he taught the paltry Indian community in South Africa the *Satyagraha*, “*force born of truth and love of non-violence.*” He led a protest march of two thousand Indian men and women through the Satyagraha protesting against the taking of fingerprints of all Indians in the Transvaal, in South Africa. The Ghandi philosophy was at work, for the first time. When he returned to India in 1915, he went throughout India teaching his philosophy and seeing the poor and down-trodden. In 1919, he was arrested by the British colonial system for calling for a work stoppage throughout all India.

India was under restriction on cotton growing to maintain markets for British clothes and in protest, he took to wearing a simple loin cloth. In 1930, he launched a massive protest against India’s costly salt tax, dubbed the Salt March. He was jailed together with a throng of others but, by 1931, the government had given in to their demands! It was during his close shave with insidious racism in South Africa that, instead of crying foul, saw him hatch the *Satyagraha*, a force that soon would take India by storm and set it on a revolutionary path.

Have you ever heard of Aubrey Beardsley? He was young and restive like a bird, and by age ten. Tuberculosis, a life threatening disease had been diagnosed on him, and that fact alone, left him reeling under a celebrated sense of urgency-knowing clearly that his life could be cut-

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off anytime from the face of this earth. He was a prodigy, who read avidly and voraciously. He clearly knew that his journey on earth was going to be brief. He heavily consumed the works of Shakespeare, Congreve and Wycherley, poets, Chatterton and Pope and many more. At twenty, Aubrey had fully developed a unique graphic style and by age twenty five, he had crossed to the land of the silent. What a brief journey on earth. In his brief life, he took London and Paris by storm. He astounded artists and critics, in his brief life.

Having realised that his time under the sun was going to be short, he did everything with urgency and gave the world the best of drawings and history has etched his name in the sands of history, forever. No matter your age, emulate Aubrey. He converted his short time life on earth into urgency and did wonders for the world in that brief stay. Start working hard and with urgency for your name to be engraved in the sands of history. How old are you now? What have you done for mankind? What have you done for the Creator God? What have you done for yourself? No matter the number of years you will spend on earth, it is all for a short time. One day it will be over. Once it lapses, you will never ever get another chance under the sun. You will be history. But, if you achieve mind-bogglers for mankind, you will not die in the minds of the people. They will remember you. They will honour you. They will bow down at your grave-yard.

David Livingstone {1813-1873}, a Scottish, was sent into the “Dark Continent” by the London Missionary Society to further explore and carry on the work begun by other missionaries. It was a tough assignment for anyone who was light hearted. There was fever in the continent. There were mosquitoes in the continent. In 1857, he hung up his missionary boots and worked purely as an explorer. He made the interior of Africa known to the world. He brought the Western World to Africa. Today, those who remained comfortable in Europe while he suffered from mosquito bites cannot be remembered. As for David Livingstone, the world worships at his graveyard. His

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grave yard is now a tourist attraction, converging the four corners of the globe together to honour the man who braved all negatives and travelled across Botswana, the Congo along the Zambezi River. He went to Lake Nyasa in Malawi and went to Lake Tanganyika. He crossed Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans. Only those who sleep dream, goes an old adage. Only those who work very hard receive the glory and honour worth of hard work. It is your time to face your worst of times with a positive mind, knowing clearly that a brighter tomorrow is coming. A brighter tomorrow is for those who endure. Those who dare go despite the cringing situations attaining. Today history cannot afford to ignore David Livingstone.

Jesus lived a short life under the sun: thirty three years only. That was a very short life span. But, He maximised every moment of it and shook the world with what He did in that short space of time. Biblical history and other writings apart from the Bible are filled to capacity with the actions of a man called Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He was a great revolutionary character. He revolutionised the way man understood God. He revolutionised man-to-man relationships. The results of his revolutionary thinking have had the greatest impact on humanity into everlasting. Anyone who clearly deciphers his word will never remain the same. The man Jesus Christ never went to school, never wrote any book but no single individual under the sun has ever been written about like Jesus Christ. No-one has ever been talked about like Jesus Christ. We have many heroes under the sun, who have done wonderful things for this world, but no-one, whatsoever, has ever come closer to Jesus Christ in terms of doing good for humanity, and no-one will ever do that. Great people's histories fade away with time but that of Jesus will be known into everlasting.

Value and maximise your presence under the sun, no matter what. As for this man Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the course of his ministry on earth was marked by untold resistance to His teachings, rejection

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of His teachings was rife but, despite all that, he prevailed and created Himself a name into everlasting. Earthly times were changed following the birth of the greatest humanist ever to roam the face of the earth. Victory is born out of a struggle. Jesus struggled and was victorious. When were you born? The year you were born is identified in honour of this man Jesus Christ.

Let me chronicle to you the life of a French hero who rattled the sands of history despite him being entangled by the worst of times. This man, Louise Braille was born in France, a bouncing boy with full eyesight like anyone else, long back before the advent of hospitals and clinics. His father owned and worked in his workshop. One day, while still a kid, he followed his father to his workshop and just played around while his father was busy with his sharp tools, tanning hides.

Once his father had gone out to chat with a client, Louis grabbed one sharp object and emulated what his father did with it. He slipped and fell down on the sharp object. His eye was deeply cut by the sharp object, completely destroying it at once. Over a few days, the sore eye worsened releasing pus to the other uncut eye. There was no medication in those days, its coming was light years ahead. There was nothing his parents could do about it, but just gaze at him wreathing in untold agony. Over a few weeks the situation worsened to the extent that the pus from the bad eye eventually affected the other eye, leaving him completely blind!

For someone who had been able to see, going blind was terrible! He could see his friends no more. He could never see the faces of his parents, his teachers, the village priest and everyone he had known before. His world became a world of darkness. Someone who had run across the mountains and rivers and villages could no longer do that. He now needed someone to hold his hand and take him to the

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kitchen, bedroom and the toilet, etc. Oh, what a heart rending change of events. The world around him changed completely for the worst.

When he was taken to school, he no longer could write as he used to do before. There were no schools for the blind then. His teachers asked him orally while his friends wrote on books. Legend has it that Louis was intelligent. He correctly and intelligently answered questions. Answering questions orally did not please young Louis, at all. It made him sleepless that others were writing yet he was precluded from that. That poked his heart relentlessly, each time saddening him the more.

One day, the village priest went to Paris for church business. While he was there, he heard that a school for the blind was being established in Paris. He immediately rushed to the village to inform Louis's parents who agreed to let their dear, blind son attend that school, far away from home. Louis went and joined other blind kids from all over France who had already converged for their supposed schooling. The living conditions were not good either at that school. Students quickly developed pneumonia due to poor, dump conditions prevalent at the newly established school for the blind.

Louis was very unhappy at school due to his lack of eyesight. When he was told that he was going to attend a school for the blind, he thought he was going to read and write like the rest. His desire, since becoming blind, was to read and write like the rest, despite his loss of eyesight. But, this was not the case at the school of the blind. They just wasted time at the newly established school for the blind, save for once or twice in a while when a passage would be read to them by someone with eyesight and they answered questions orally. It was the same old story from the old school to the new school. It was just the oral questions all over, nothing else new as he had expected.

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In great dissatisfaction, Louis asked himself if anything could be done to make him and other blind people read and write like the rest. He was told there was nothing to do about it. He thought about it over and over again until he started working on an idea that had crossed his mind that he could try to come up with something for blind people. That thought was the seedling for a great vision that would change the world of the blind and put them at par with people with full eye sight. That vision made him restless. It made him stand up when he wanted to sit down. It made him sit down when he wanted to stand up. It made talk when he wanted to be quiet. It made him quiet when he wanted to talk. It was a great vision that rattled him. It conjured into life another Louis. A different Louis altogether. A roaring lion, with mane all over its face!

He was never comfortable with the status quo-blind people were considered social outcasts, unproductive people. His burning vision would change all that, forever! That vision which gave him sleepless nights, which made him stand up when he wanted to sit down or sit down when he wanted to stand up, would never leave the world of the blind the same. He started developing his idea of coming up with something that would enable blind people to read and write bit by bit and worked on it over a very long period of time. He was often seen sitting alone working on his project. He eventually came out with what is known the world over as the BRAILLE system or simply BRAILLE-the system used by the blind for reading and writing like anyone else. What a gift to the world! Someone in the world of total darkness came up with a great gift for the world and created history despite that worst of times upon him. The worst of his times became the best of his times. Today, the world worships at his feet. The blind are no longer barricaded by blindness. They just read and write like you and me!

Louis ruthlessly demonstrated to the world that despite his blindness, a situation that fills our hearts with sorrow, he grabbed the seemingly



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impossible situation around him and solved what God wanted solved for the world. While people around Louis felt sorry for him, God smiled as Louis's hands groped for one key after the other, hit on that key which failed to do what he wanted until at long last, he stumbled onto the right key. He could see and feel it in his mind, body and soul that he had to bring out something according to what he saw in his mind, the inner Louise with full eyesight, that which converses with the spirit-world though his physical eyes were completely sealed.

For Louis, blindness was no excuse! And, you too, the worst of your times are no excuse. They are a great opportunity for you to do wonders and create history. He had to complete his assignment without any iota of complaint. Why complain yourself that the worst of times are upon you. Instead, be grateful and go for gold in them. There is calmness after every storm. The calmness is your best of times. Someone had to be blind to solve blind people's problems; otherwise a person with eyesight couldn't understand the world of the blind. Going through the valley of blindness, left Louis with a touch of fame and fortune. Today, the blind read and write just like those with full eyesight. If you also develop the Louis attitude, you will be laced with fame and fortune after your worst of times are over.

The world got a solution to a world problem through Louis's suffering initially and happiness and satisfaction eventually followed. God wants that all that He loaded onto you to be off-loaded into this world, before you cross over to the spirit realm and one way of bringing that is the method of going through painful seasons. Pain has changed the world. The physical dimension demands those talents loaded onto everyone to be brought out. Before Louis developed this system, a certain man, a soldier, with full eye sight, had been working on the same problem without success. Since he wasn't blind, he couldn't come out with a fitting solution for the

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blind, except, Louis, who was blind and properly loaded for the demanding assignment and was perfectly loaded with the correct talent for the assignment but, if he had complained about his gloomy situation, he would not have achieved what he achieved for the world. Convert your worst of times into the best of your times by going for gold in those dark moments. Ask miners, they will tell you that gold is embedded inside hard rocks. It's never easily found on the surface. Take the worst of your times to be instructive times, times which will move you from one level to the other and surely it leave you never the same again. Your worst of times will uplift you from obscurity into the limelight.

Back in 1955, in the midst of American racism with its rich scorn for blacks, Rosa Parks, an American black activist refused to give up a seat to a white person on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, sparking a bus boycott that ignited the American civil rights movement. Blacks were considered second class citizens in America. That kind of disrespect for a white-man carried with it a heavy penalty. She was arrested for that but, many blacks across America joined her. It was a historical action she took right in the face of racism, which freed not only blacks, but whites also eventually felt free of their injustice because blacks who wanted to be free had taken massive action. That action alone changed the face of racism. Author Brian Lanker talked a lot about her in his piece of work: *I Dream A World-Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*. Anything grievous could have happened to her but she braved herself in the face of death and refused with her seat. Those were her worst of times, but, later on she smiled as the best of times embraced her and historians sought for her from all angles. Hordes of journalists swarmed around her, creating history for her. It was never the same Rosa Parks people used to know and look down upon. She gave impetus to the American Civil Rights Movement. Like Rosa Parks, refuse to give the worst of times a seat in your life. Let the worst of your times redefine you but never give them a permanent seat in your life.

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Refuse to budge. The worst of your times will one day respect you for your unwavering steadfastness.

This book would quickly lose its scent of flavour if we continue journeying down the memory lanes without quickly chronicling the life of a shimmering example like Hellen Keller, who found glory and gold in the worst of her times. She demonstrated to the world how to grab the worst of times by its horns and turn it into gold. Hellen Keller, despite what seemed like insurmountable mountains in her life, went on to achieve what men and women of her day who were endowed physically with everything failed to achieve in their day. She was born in the US and was below 2 when a terrible disease struck and left her deaf, dumb and blind. Her parents tried everything to communicate with her without success, until they got help from an expert, Anne Sullivan, an expert in hand language who taught her everything from simple table manners to reading and writing. She learnt, in her early life, to read what people said, first, by following the movements of their lips before migrating to the Braille system.

She went to school, despite all her misfortune and earned herself a degree from Harvard, the most prestigious university. She now had learned to communicate through writing. She spent most of her time visiting the blind and deaf. At times she visited soldiers injured during the First and Second World Wars. She also had a deep love for nature and art. She once said *“If I Could See, I Would Marry First of All.”*

She travelled extensively the world over, wrote many books and met many leading personalities of her day including Winston Churchill. If you pursue your vision with intensity, despite all the challenges around you, you will quickly learn the art of turning challenges into opportunities and meet any world personalities of your choice. She once said, *“I thank God for my handicaps for through them I have found myself, my work, and my God.”* It is through hard times that we discover

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our true-selves, and for those with spiritual dexterity like Hellen, you will experience miracles performed by yourselves, as you will achieve far better than what you thought you would ever achieve. In that dark world, in that silent world, Hellen found the true God. She found her true self and her work.

She went on to achieve great things in her life time and the sands of history have her name carefully encrypted on them. She will never die, but remain a shining example to those who face mountains in their lives, that tables of troubles can be overturned into positivity. She achieved what boggles the mind of an astute person, despite the mountains that cropped up in her early life, roaring all the way along her life-line, but, at last, she held the head of Goliath in her hand like the fearless young David! The worst of times, are your Goliath. You can decapitate their head through believing in yourself that you can strike them down and hold their sting, their head, into your hand and proclaim victory.

Legend has it that Henry Ford, founder of the world famous Ford Motor Corporation, only received schooling to grade three. His upbringing is not a good story to tell. He was poor in Detroit. But what does the world have out of a grade three chap who thought big, despite the restrictive times and lack of education? At the inception of his business, he was handicapped by poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. Everyone has seen the work of his hand today. Every road under the sun knows a Ford Motor vehicle! Ford motor vehicles command respect in the motor industry today. He turned those early, hard times into a vision that has shaken the world ever since. And, you too, my brother, have no need to excuse yourself. Excuse has no heroism. It is the king-pin of the façade in cowardice. Bravery and massive action, even in the face of a devastating storm, create heroism. Put your armour of war in the worst of times. The sun will stand still for you to ramshackle your enemy, the worst of your times and create history for yourself. I reiterate: Victory is born out of a

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struggle. Birds will belt their melodious tunes for you to move to the best of times. Clouds will whizz past your head encouraging you to take your armour and leave this world a better place for everyone to live in.

I read *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens some years back when I was at primary school. My brothers; Shadreck, Judah and Abednigo, the late, have great flair in literary works. There were volumes of books to bury ourselves in when we were growing up. We all take after our late father, Mr Nose, whom we referred to as “the linguist” because of his dexterity and super, un-paralleled command of languages. Now, I find myself seeking for every gist of information about Charles Dickens who, according to legend, was no writer when he was comfortable in his first marriage. He was comfortable working in those smoky industries in industrial Britain. He was comfortable with fourteen year olds getting employed in the same industries with him. He was comfortable with the squalid environment around him until God asked the best of his times to give way to the worst of his times, letting the worst of times dine with him in unkind ways. His wife divorced him and the divorce greatly pained him and left him devastated and despondent. Huge pain accumulated in his heart until he found a channel to pour out all the pain. He told his devastating story to the world through the venom of his pen.

At that point, after divorce, during the hardest of his times, he discovered another Charles Dickens that was lying idle in him! The unknown giant Charles Dickens, roared from the pain and awakened to life. He had never known that he was a writer, not just a writer but a purified one. The newly discovered Charles Dickens knitted the most beautiful love stories the world ever heard of. His love tones conjured dead love. The love stories he wrote soothed dying marriages the world over!! Out of that bitter, dark heart overweighed by hard times, came *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *Hard Times*, *Wonderful Christmas Carols* and many more stories the world loves

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reading to this day. To an astute mind, the worst of times are the best of times. They make you realise the potential that you had had no opportunity to expose until hard times gave you a good slap that awoke the giant in you.

There is no reason whatsoever why man should not climb to the highest rungs of the societal ladder in achieving anything he craves for in his lifetime. Many people met with misfortune but ever-afterwards, the courses of their lives took a sharp turn, and they started creating history thereafter. If you meet with misfortune, you have met an angel of revolutionary change in your life, if you decode the message properly. If you meet with misfortune, tarry not, history pages are calling for your signature. With the ferocity of a lion, raze through your worst of times until you ramshackle them into a thousand pieces. The worst of times are not the waste of times. Once you ramshackle your worst of times into myriads of pieces, the dawn of your best of times is approaching. Psalm 82:6, says “*you are a god!*” “*I, the Most High God, say that all of you are gods and also my children.*” We now know, clearly, that we are “gods,” and, being a god the whole universe listens to you and follows your commands. Command for gold in the worst of your times. Go for it and you will get it.

As a god, your word is power. As a “god,” when you start talking, angels that surround you everywhere in the spirit-realm which is just an elevation away, your words laced with your trust in God, move the Lord’s angels in the unseen world, the world of the spirit realm and things start moving in your favour! Being a god, you can command that un-seeming situation to quickly disappear into thick mist and leave you basking in the best of your times. You are destined for greatness, my brother. Get up, stand up and make history. You have but only one life to live. There will be no other chance under the sun. Maybe somewhere else, not under the sun. How can you afford to let golden moments slip-away while you burry your head in the sands of mediocrity.

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In 1810, a man by the name James Holman was invalidated from the British navy after serving in the navy during the Napoleonic wars. He had, by 1810, gone totally blind but, he utterly refused to be confined to the restrictive chair for the blind, and quickly enrolled at Edinburgh University with a sole view of learning how to commit detailed information to memory. He told himself that he was destined for greatness and never wanted to let blindness be an excuse. His family and friends persuaded him for a few years to stay within the confines of safe environments but it wasn't long before boredom and monotony drove him into a wild dream, and he solitarily wandered through France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands despite his blindness. He changed his world and attracted public attention and sympathy.

He used public transport and stayed in lodges. He did what everyone should do, despite the blindness that had come to besiege him. He realised that his affliction was his passport to whatever he wanted. People were kind and went out of their way to guide him. His fame spread like veld-fire as British newspapers sang about him. In 1827, he was on a tour of the world after navigating Tsarist Russia. He went to Africa, Brazil and everywhere. He wrote many mind-catching accounts of his journeys. By the time he died in 1857 in London, he was in demand as a speaker and a dinner guest. His wrestle with the worst of times, turning them into gargantuan opportunities for himself was not in vain. History welcomed him as a victor and opened pages for him for demonstrating to the world that disability is not inability. Today, we pluck wonderful lessons from his illustrious life. The pendulum of life threw him into the worst of times, but, he was not done as he vivaciously caught the swing of the pendulum the second time around and landed on the other side of the swing. Fame and fortune had heard about him and they loved him and sought for a place for him in the sands of history.

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A woman by the name Marilyn Hamilton faced with challenges after falling from a deep cliff. The swing of the pendulum left her reeling in misfortune as the deep fall left her bound on a wheelchair. But, she vowed to catch the pendulum as it swung to the other side of the best of times. She could have focussed on what she could not do thereafter. Instead of focussing on what she could not do, she focussed on the possibilities that arose, thereafter. She saw an opportunity in her mishap! Being confined to a restrictive wheelchair frustrated her at first and she quickly realised she was best equipped to design a better one! That was the beginning of the revolution that took the archaic wheelchair industry by storm, as she, with two others, went on to form a would-be multi-million dollar company called Motion Designs. She went on to revolutionise the wheelchair industry like never before. She was into it. She was disabled and clearly knew the challenges and discomforts facing the disabled. Absolutely no-one, but herself, was better placed to solve that problem for the disabled.

She could have endlessly cried, but, she realised that the worst of her times could be turned into the best of her times and took massive action with the ferocity of a wounded lion and historians sought for her and honoured her with a special place in the sands of history. If you ever meet with your worst of times, which are sure to come, if they haven't yet paid you a visit, you will need to do like one legendary warrior, who, a long time ago, faced a demanding situation in the hands of a powerful foe whose numbers far outweighed his. He crossed a river with his men to the enemy's territory, and, once there, ordered that their {his warriors} boats be burnt, thus leaving only two options available to him and his men: either defeat the enemy or perish in the hands of the enemy. In their paltry numbers, they won the battle! The commander had a few warriors than his foes. He was in his enemy's territory. The bad times taught him to think outside the box, and he won the battle, instantly, turning the bad times into good times. Wonderful demonstrations from Marilyn



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and the anonymous warrior. That is the kind of mentality that creates heroes. You cannot be a hero by backing-off. You cannot be a hero by crying foul. You cannot be a hero by complaining all over. Complaining empowers the foe. Your worst of times are a waste of time and they weaken your zeal to move forward if you continue complaining. You will not pluck the correct lessons and clothe yourself with the rightful armour for the battle to cross into the land of victors.

Every nimble mind wonders about what was going on in Soichiro Honda's mind when others were busy training as mechanics yet he attended to his boss's child. Before he founded the Honda Motor Company, he waited seasons tending to his boss's child before he was allowed to train as a mechanic. His was a measure of commitment to his cause. He could simply have left. But, he was committed to his vision. How many of us are not familiar with the work of his vision and hand? Every grain of sand in every road has felt the weight of his machines in one way or the other. You need massive, ruthless commitment to see your vision through. The road between the worst of times and the best of times which leads to achieving your vision is fraught with trials and tribulations which are meant to strengthen you. Cheer up during your season of distress.

Folk tale has a wonderful story about someone, who, while wandering in the jungle, came across a young butterfly which was pitifully struggling to come out of a haze of carcoon strings that precluded it from freeing itself and fly away. He looked at it as it relentlessly struggled, and felt pity over it, and decided to assist it come out of the carcoon. He took a sharp razor and cut off the strings that bound it, restraining it from freely flying away. Naturally, it was supposed to go through that process. He carefully cut the strings and released it. It gladly flew away but that young butterfly did not go through the whole process of its development, resulting in it failing to develop its colours fully. It was by nature, supposed to

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struggle with that haze of strings and cut them off one by one on its own and fly away. By struggling to release itself from the fetters of the carcoon, it was going to develop its strength and colours. It was a weak butterfly as compared to other siblings. The worst of times are very necessary. They develop you into a lion. They sharpen you. But, like butterflies, you are never meant to stay there forever. You are supposed to struggle with the worst of times and then free yourself and fly away into freedom, the best of your times. The worst of your times will strengthen you.

Biblical Abraham faced with scorn and ridicule emanating from barrenness at age 70. Men of his age were basking in cavalcades of children, yet he had no one to turn to as a child. Childlessness frustration was boiling in him, and his wife was despondent too. Biologically, the two had crossed the line of ever having a child. Biologically, there was no need for them to keep on trying to have a child. They had failed by human measure. They were spent forces in child bearing. Abraham and his wife were jointly and severally responsible for their failure to have a child. They had no-one to tell their story, but God, who, at Abraham's 100<sup>th</sup> year, him a child. If Abraham had had a child normally, like the rest, his trust, faith and sole comfort in the Lord would have waned. Those piercing years when scorn and ridicule became his daily bread fastened his trust in the Lord and at age 100, Isaac was born to him. Isaac's birth wiped away all their tears. Those who laughed at them laughed enjoyably with them, eventually.

Their season of bad times finally gave way to the season of happiness. A seed of a great nation was born of a ridiculed man yet those who laughed at him perished with their ridicule. They have no history. Abraham endured separation from relatives, the usual environment and faced strangers but that was the seed for greatness. As long as mankind roams the face of the earth, the history of Abraham will be retold to all human ears into everlasting eternity.

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While Egyptian toddlers cuddled their mother's bosoms all day-long, Moses was kicking the air unattended, shoved in a basket which floated from one position to the other with him in the Nile River. Crocodiles sniffed human blood from him. Their insidious teeth tried several times to pounce on him but, he saw, miraculously, the dawn of the following morning. He had a very bad start in life. That bad start carried him to the king's palace. That was a drastic change of events. Instead of being crushed to death by the king's daughter, he became an adopted child of the king's daughters and that was the beginning of his training for leading the Lord's people into the land of their ancestors. His getting into the Pharaoh's palace was no mistake. He needed to hear what leaders say about their subjects. He needed schooling in the sciences of humanity. He needed to understand the strategies Pharaoh used to control the masses. All that was going to mould him into a fine leader of a great nation. For children, the worst thing to them is growing up with a surrogate mother. A child who grows with a surrogate mother quickly hardens due to un-seeming treatment in most cases. That was his history. His own mother was a surrogate mother to him, officially. That on its own, did not preclude him from demanding independence for the Israelites. They achieved their independence through him and crossed seas into the land of their nativity. My brother, your bad times are golden times. They will carry you to the palaces of this world.

It never touched the tangent of Prophet Jonah's mind that by disobeying God, he was going to pass through terrifying storms and whiz past the insidious teeth of a big fish, uncrushed, for its evening meal! He was locked in the big fish's belly for three consecutive days and nights. That was a terrifying time, but, it culminated in him making a U-turn. He changed his direction. He changed his vision and embraced a God-given vision. When the storms blew the ship belligerently, Jonah quickly reached his turning point, considering the vitriol in the storm and remembered instantly what the Lord had sent

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him to do. It was during his stay in the belly of the fish that he remembered and vowed that he would go and do as the Creator God had commanded. It was during his worst of times that he saw how merciful the Creator God is. At the depth of the dark sea, surrounded all over by death, swirling waters and reeds, he made solemn promises to the Lord. And once the fish had vomited him on the shores, he heard the voice of the Lord for the second time commanding him to execute God's work and obeyed the voice instantly unlike at first when he coined a strategy to run away from the presence of the Lord. He went into preaching the Word of the Creator God right across the great city of Nineveh. The worst of Jonah's times came when the muscles of the gigantic fish carried him to its unforgiving belly. He probably saw the gigantic muscles crush other fish in the belly but sparing him. The Creator God desires that you see his hand, his glory in the worst of your times. When you look back and reflect on them, glorify him.

But, instead of crying despondently, Jonah grabs the opportunity and repents of his wrong doings and turns to the Lord instantly. Had Jonah not been swallowed by a big fish, his story could simply have been that of an ordinary prophet. His story is different from all other Prophets. It is a story of a prophet who ran away from God's assignment and met the consequences of doing so. But, Jonah, unlike all the prophets of his time, has his stay in the belly of a big fish. That staying in the belly of the fish represents the height of his worst of times and that separates him from the rest of the prophets of his day. But, right there he made the right choice and hearkened to the voice of the Lord. His stay in the belly of a fish gave him history that will be preached into eternity! His story is a referral story to all those who get assignments from the Creator God but evade them. The Creator God commands and wants things done the way He wants them done. Any deviation from that faces with stiff penalties. Jonah's record stay in the belly of the fish gave him entrance into biblical history.

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Crisis are wake up calls in our lives. They will always leave you at another better, elevated position. When Jonah met with his crisis, it never left him the same. He was elevated to a position of significance. In the Bible, Joseph carries the Creator God's vision of being premier in Egypt but the road is pimpled with thorns and thistles to strengthen him for a demanding vision lying ahead of him, for him. Remember the story of the young butterfly that struggled and was helped by a sympathiser. It never developed its colours. You too, will not bloom if you don't go through the gruelling mill of troubles, a necessary step in the pursuit of success. In tobacco farming, they apply this principle of hardening the seedlings first while the seedlings are still in mother-beds. They are starved of water to harden them. Once they are used to lacking water, the seedlings are transplanted from the mother beds and placed in their final positions. In their final positions in the fields they don't get as much water as they used to get when they were young. They wilt during day time, only to resurrect into life at sunset. But, that has no effect on them. They would be used to hard-life. They can survive the strain. In as much as hardening prepares the young plants for tougher days ahead your worst of times are also preparing you for more challenges ahead, which you are expected to conquer with ease.

Joseph is sold by his own brothers, not neighbours, for that matter! That, on its own, was the epitome of hatred of brother by brother! He is sold to strangers by his own brothers, whereby he is taken to a strange land, with strange people at a tender age. Young Joseph is weaned from the warmth of his parents, friends and the usual environments. A lot of harrowing experiences lay ahead of him in his journey to a position of authority, fame and fortune. While it looked insane on the face of it, behind the scenes it was meant to strengthen him for authority. His father, too, was heart-broken. He dearly missed his son, day and night and wished the calamity would have fallen on him, not his dear son. As if that was not enough, he is put in prison on false accusations, in a foreign land. It probably went

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through his mind that he was never going to be free and see his own people again. There is no doubt, he terribly missed his father and brothers. He would only see them in dreams, for a while, before the dreams faded into nothingness with time. Joseph's story makes many hearts cringe. That was his portion of dark days under the sun. But, those dark days led him to being noticed by the Pharaoh's administration system and strangely, eventually, the dawn of his best of times blows a breeze that leaves him in the prime minister's chair in a foreign piece of land.

At the end of the tunnel, all Egyptians saluted him, a foreigner for that matter and his brothers too, bowed down to him. He was the final man before the Pharaoh! He updated the king on the state of the nation on a daily basis while Egyptians, the owners of the land, saluted him. He updated the king on the national security status. He updated the king on the state of religion in the nation. He could, at will, tell the Pharaoh about the great Israeli God. He planned for the Egyptian nation and ensured the plans were executed by responsible authorities down the line to the last person in Egypt. Know this my brother, God always starts with the worst to bring out the best in us. The worst of times are meant to bring out the best in us! No matter your situation, the worst of times have come to harden you for bigger assignments. If you find yourself never falling into problems, you probably will not go anywhere. Its better you rise up and face problems by doing great things for mankind. You will find that it's not an easy road to travel. That problem will impart you with lessons that will take you somewhere under the sun.

In John 2:9 "*....He did not know where the wine had come from but the servants did. He called the bridegroom over and said, "The best wine is always served first. Then after the guests have had plenty, the other wine is served. But you have kept the best until last!"*" With the Creator God, unlike the master of the ceremony whose experience starts with the best to the worst of wines, it is the worst of times first, then the best of times last, as

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Jesus demonstrated at Cana. His wine, the best, was the last. These are the fundamentals of the kingdom of heaven. The fundamental lessons in this verse indicate to us that what we term the worst of times are the Creator God's best of times to bring out the best from every-one of the human race. That approach, leaves you right at the point of greatness. When your worst of times weary you, remember: Joseph entered into the Egyptian system of administration and headed straight to the throne through the unforgiving chains of Egyptian prisons. The fetters of the prison handed him ruler-ship! The fetters of your worst of times are handing down to you your certificate for ruler-ship. You are a god. You can never be imprisoned by the worst of times.

In the animal kingdom, comfort is a dream. Predators are all over, day and night. They threaten both young and old animals, always. Animals that make it to the next day are never comfortable. That discomfort has seen them develop strategies to outwit their enemies. Their strategies are the best strategies in comparison to their predators and the predators too have developed better strategies to outwit their prey. Only the fittest and most cunning can survive to the next day. In the eagle world, eagle mothers have a tendency to put sharp stones and thorns in their nest during construction. They initially cover the stones and thorns with feathers when the eaglets are still young and tender and need tender care. They provide the eaglets with comfort to a certain extent up to when the eagle mothers expect the young ones to take to the skies and fend for themselves. If they fail to do that at the expiry of their youthful period, their mothers remove the feathers covering the sharp stones and thorns. The young ones begin to feel uncomfortable. The discomfort forces them out of the nest.

Once out there, out of the comfort zone, they have two options only: either face predators and become extinct or take to the skies and see sunrise again. Sometimes the mother eagle carries the young one high

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up into the skies and leaves it in the midst of the blue sky. The chick either flies and survives or falls flat to the ground and perishes! The eaglets, once left alone in mid-air, learn to fly instantly and take to the skies and by day-end, they would be in mid-air chasing after prey, otherwise hunger would be waiting in open wings to devour the eaglets. That is nature! Whilst the worst of times visit you, don't be comfortable with them. They are there to tell you that it is time to move to the next step. They must give you sleepless nights. It must be a starting point to take you to the river of best times. It must be time to time the next swing of the pendulum, catch it, hang onto it and be dropped on the other end of the swing, the best of times. God throws darkness on us to dispel comfort zones in our lives. One day, with hindsight, when you look back, you will smile to your ears and give praise to the advent of the worst of times. They poked your brains and you thought dangerously and moved some steps up the ladder until today, you are seated at the highest echelons of society and your heart-breaking story stirs nations. Give honour to God during your hour of the worst of times and during the hour of your best of times.

The Creator God never intends that we remain in the worst of times forever. He wants you to learn wonderful lessons from the worst of your times for the good of others and for His glory, then solve your problems that cropped up during your season of darkness, equipped fully with the lessons learned from the down under. Our dark spots are the best points of our lives. We discover the other persons in us during tough times. We discover other sleeping abilities in us or even our real talents during such tough times. If it hadn't been worse for Israel in the hands of the giant Goliath, no one would have known that there was a mighty man of war in young David. Goliath's shining hour, the worst of times for Israel, his best of times, became the best of times for young David and the whole nation of Israel and the worst of times for Goliath and the whole Philistine nation. Israeli women, thereafter, composed and sang songs of victory in honour



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of David. That honour did not come in a silver platter. It had to come through the face of death. David pushed death to the frontiers when it wanted to wipe him off the face of the earth.

Ezekiel Guti is a house-hold name in Zimbabwe, the entire Africa and the worlds beyond. Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa {ZAOGA}, one of the fastest growing Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe and the entire African continent, and now spreading its tentacles beyond the African continent to envelope the world, is synonymous with Ezekiel Guti, its founder. The two names have become inseparable. He has become a world-class Apostle and has gone on to establish a University, {ZEGU} Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University. Well done Apostle Guti! You stir the hearts of many, Apostle Guti. You are a shining example in our midst. But, legend has it that he had the barest minimum of formal schooling. He learnt carpentry in his early years. He struggled to learn to read the English Bible. His desire for success was greater than the forbidding circumstances in his life in his early days. If you watch him on television today, you can still hear that his English is not polished but he has achieved far much greater things than those with polished English. His leadership qualities are amicable. He is a great visionary who thinks dangerously and executes his plans with the ferocity of a swollen river.

He has written volumes of books yet those better positioned than him have not done anything with what they know, but stand by and admire him. The rest of the better positioned people will go back into the belly of the earth without leaving behind anything for future generations, not even a family inheritance! Ezekiel Guti has even gone on to obtain a Doctorate from Zoe College. He is now a proud holder of a PHD. It was seemingly very easy for Ezekiel Guti to simply have obeyed his sorry state in his early years but, the sting of a poor back-ground catapulted him into where he is today. He is a shimmering example in our midst. Once again, well done Baba

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Ezekiel Guti for demonstrating to the world that negative circumstances are great opportunities in our lives. The world has plucked volleys of lessons from your life. Your harrowing experiences were like a sour orange, at first. But you could not throw it away because it's sour. You add sugar onto the sour juice to get a drink out of it.

One day I visited a factory that produces orange drinks. I was amazed by the way they do it. Contrary to common belief that they use fresh, sweet oranges, they take the fresh, sweet oranges and put them away for days to ferment. When they ferment and turn sour, that is when they can convert the sour taste into a sweet taste that can endure the taste of time. If juice is made automatically from fresh oranges, the juice doesn't survive the taste of time. It turns bad. Let the Creator God store you for days and ferment you in the oven of your problems. When he takes you for processing, you will produce the sweetest and long lasting juice for the world around you. Take today, your harrowing experiences and turn them into something good for this world. Don't delay, the world is waiting for you.

Some people have a propensity of citing lack of adequate financial resources as excuses for failing to embark onto pursuing their dreams. That is not an excuse. In fact, there should be no excuse whatsoever in the pursuit of your dreams, your burning vision. Excuses are for failures. Failures are those that have surrendered their dreams to defeat. People that have reconditioned themselves to accepting the worst of times as their hem. The moment when you don't have adequate financial resources is the moment you should hone your skills in saving the little that you have for greater projects. The Creator God will not give you lots and lots of money for wasting. Once the money has been given to you, use it wisely to create the best out of it. A dollar can create everlasting history yet a million dollars can fail to create anything if poorly handled. Brothers and sisters, this is the hour to stand up and shine.

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Former Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor, Dr Gideon Gono, had very humble beginnings. He developed himself through distance learning. He was not comfortable with his worst of times. He used the pain of the nasty environment to propel him forward and never had any excuses for his lack of proper schooling. He started his employment carrier as a tea boy and messenger. Most people who start employment at that level quickly settle for mediocrity and retire still at that level having dined and dined with monotony on a daily basis. Very few can shake the chains of lack and rise and stick their heads out like tortoises when they start at such low rungs of society. As for Dr Gideon Gono, that did not deter him from quickly climbing the rungs of employment into the apex position at the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

There was a lot of talk locally about his well-timed turn-around strategies in many parastatals as he set his hand on one ailing government controlled entity after another and gave them a good dose of turn-around strategies and a life-line of financial resources eventually. Let your worst of times push you into the best of your times. Their presence in your life is a clear signal to you that move on with no apology, victory is just by the corner! Play hard ball and never apologise. Your demonstration to the needy world Dr Gono has etched itself a place in the annals of history. A page has been opened for you. The sands of history welcome you with open wings!

Shadreck, Misheck and Abednigo, young men from Israeli sands, came into captivity in Babylonia and entered the annals of biblical history through bumping onto what insidious fate had stored up for them in Babylon! They faced the fangs of venomous Babylonian law but within hours, they had hit upon the epitome of the best of times, gleefully waving goodbye to the worst of times, as people were left with their mouths agap, agog and aglore. They faced hissing, instant decimation when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia decreed that they be thrown into a fiery furnace instantly, for defying a decree to

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worship Babylonian gods and a statue that had been erected for all to worship. They defied that and chose to honour the God of their ancestors, the true Living God of Israel in the face of death. The furnace was angered seven times more than usual for punishing them for defying the King's orders to worship an idol that towered into the skies like clouds before them. They said NO emphatically and faced the full force of the law. But, that was the path to etching their names in everlasting history. Today, your Bible is incomplete without the story of Shadreck, Misheck and Abednigo.

The soldiers who bundled Misheck, Shadreck and Abednigo up and threw them into the fiery furnace were the ones who perished in the hands of the unforgiving fiery tongues of flames as they tried to shove Misheck, Shadreck and Abednigo into the fiery furnace. They were instantly swallowed by the fiery tongues of the flames that licked their tongues everywhere seeking for victims to swallow yet the culprits, Shadreck, Misheck and Abednigo, during the worst of their times, were joined by the *“the fourth one who looked like a god.”* *“They {Misheck, Shadreck and Abednigo} came out, and the king’s high officials, governors, and advisors all crowded around them. The men {Misheck, Shadreck and Abednigo} weren’t burnt, their hair wasn’t scorched, and their clothes didn’t even smell like smoke.”* Daniel 3:27. You can imagine the anxiety that gripped the crowd as the King of Babylon hysterically shouted, *“You servants of the Most High God, come out at once!”*

Everyone stood up in bewilderment and sheer amusement, taking a gaze at the three Israeli young men, as they strolled vivaciously in front of the king, their eyes full of landslide victory against the worst of times. Tears gushed down people's cheeks like waterfalls as Shadreck, Misheck and Abednigo, stood with emphasis before the timorous King, his knees kissing each other with fear. History was made at the height of the worst of times. The worst of times for the three Israelites was, in simple terms, a death sentence. It was political treason to defy a king's orders and called for an instant death penalty.

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Worse still, the defiant young men were foreigners. Not only foreigners, but slaves who had no dignity at all. But, by end of day, it was untold news throughout the Babylonian kingdom that day and the worlds beyond that three young Israelites had made history by defying the sting of the fiery furnace which had consumed countless numbers of others before them.

Today, your Bible is incomplete if it doesn't carry the shocking story of Misheck, Shadreck and Abednigo. Their history, as it stands before us today, is a clear demonstration to the world that the worst of times breeds heroes who shake the sands of history to accord them their rightful places in history. Victory, once again, is born out of a struggle. Stir an unforgiving struggle against all odds in your life and bang for a place in history. Once you close your eyes and turn to the other unknown side of life that will be all there will be for you. Make hay while the sun of your life shines today. Once the sun descends down the cliffs of the horizon of your life, there will be no other opportunity, whatsoever for you.

The worst of your times carry with them your seed of glory if you manipulate them for the better. Don't let the worst of your times burry you. Agree to be covered with soils only and germinate and explode into more of yourself. Great things happen to them who are willing to go through the furnace of bad times with a positive attitude, realising that no matter the length of the season of the worst of times, it will end with dawn, as long as one goes through, under or over them with a burning vision that cannot be quenched by the vitriol of the venom of bad times. Jesus, the Son of God, if you have the right attitude, will join you in the midst of your calamity and rescue you. He will clothe you with his robes of victory, robes that cannot be burnt by human fires and carry you on his wings and take you to greener pastures, the best of times, where happiness abounds, laced with the accomplishment of set, towering visions.

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The wise say *no matter the length of the night, it will end with dawn!* Surely, when the heavenly hosts join you in the midst of your worst of times, it is the break of dawn and the setting in of unmistakable victory. That is very true, no matter the duration of your problems, they will disappear with the coming of dawn and your dew, for your refreshment, will come in the morning. You will spring with a new lease of life after your furnace ejects you. Earthly kings and their officials will marvel at you, and glorify the Creator God. Clothed in that mentality, no furnace of troubles can ever handle you. You will be too hot for it. No furnace can ever handle a “*god*” as the psalmist refers to you, victorious man, “*you are a god.*” As a god, you cannot be swallowed by the worst of times. Instead, you swallow them and show them the flip side of the coin. Show the worst of your times how great the God of the heavens is. He rescues his subjects from horrendous circumstances.

Strive Masiyiwa is making waves of success the world over. Africa seeks for him. The western world seeks for him yet, his road to fame and fortune, was filled to the brim with thorns and roaring lions to scare him away from his towering dream but he resisted all that and combed for his ford, until one day, The Late Vice President Dr. Joshua Nkomo, heard his plea with a listening ear, and budged to his plea and gave him a nod to establish a mobile network. It took him five solid years to set his foot at the door step of The Late Dr. Joshua Nkomo. His was a case of massive commitment to a cause for the betterment of communication for the good of humanity. Today, Econet Wireless, his company, covers the globe. It is a house-hold name the world-over. He met his worst of times with telling defiance to their sting and rose up to their level and after five solid years of relentless effort, trod on them victoriously, as he got the license he needed to ruthlessly take the Zimbabwean communications industry by storm.

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Today, Strive Masiyiwa needs no introduction to the world at all. He is rubbing shoulders with the Who Is Who of all leading countries. World leading personalities seek for an audience with him. His influence has transcended the globe and those who faced un-seeming situations are roaring like wounded lions after peeping through his story. He has set Africa ablaze with his dazzling achievements. Now, the world's top billionaires list is incomplete without his name.

There is no need for excuses whatsoever, my brother. When men is on his death-bed, what occupies his mind most of his last moments are regrets of what he should have done when he was still healthy and energetic. It is during that time that he starts laying great visions for his life which he failed to lay when he was healthy and able. Unfortunately, when times are over, he passes to the grave with those grand plans unreleased to the needy world. Right now, right now, is the time to stand up and make hey while the sun shines. Your days under the sun will soon pass. By the time you move to the next world, die empty of whatever you wanted to do. Revisit the story of young Aubrey, who realised that his life under the sun was going to be short-lived. He did everything with urgency in his short-lived life and gave the world big products from his gifts. A life well-lived, Aubrey! You too, my brother, run like a toddler and turn yourself into a go-getter now, and use your mighty power to achieve big things in life. The presence of the negative circumstances now in your life is a sign that just beyond the dangerous curve, good times stretch into everlasting.

Have you ever heard of Dr. Myles Munroe of The Bahamas? He was born in a forbidding environment in a third world country with all the ingredients for failure. At 16, he made a decision to be all the Creator God wanted him to be. Despite the bad times that embraced him from his early life, he is today renowned internationally as a leading pastor, motivator and author. He is a talented singer. He is sought after by celebrities for counselling. Television and radio

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stations seek for him everywhere. If he had been so lenient to his back-ground, he would have, like the rest from around the globe, just gone through the drain to the grave, silently, but, he has denied mediocrity a chance in his life. He has worked tirelessly to etch his name in the sands of history. He will live forever under the sun, as people will forever read of his works. His is an inspiring story of ruthlessly dealing with the negatives in life until one gets to the positives. Today, he sleeps in eternal rest having demonstrated to the world how one can explode in their potential.

Remember what happened to the biblical Naomi and her family? Together with her family, she left Israel, a place of the Creator, God's favour and fortress and wandered into the land of Moab, far away from the protection of God. In the land of Moab, her husband dies and leaves Naomi behind with her two sons. The two sons later got married to Moabite women. Sooner, again, tragedy with its insidious tongue, lodges at her doorstep. Her two sons die too, leaving her behind and two daughters-in-law: Orpah and Ruth, who were both of Moabite extraction. Naomi realises that calamity is upon her because she has wandered out of the hand of the Lord by leaving Israel and she remembers the protection she had in Israel under the hand of the true living Creator God and weeps bitterly. ".....*I feel very bitter for you, because the hand of Jehovah has turned against me.*"

And, thereat, she makes a decision to go back to Bethlehem, to be under the guidance and protection of the Creator God of Israel. It is very critical that while you will be wreathing in the hand of calamity, remember the Lord your God who brought you up and protected you against all vices.

She decides to go back and enjoy all the benefits stored in galore in the house of the Lord, in Israel. And Ruth too, her Moabite daughter-in-law, who has heard about the goodness of the Israeli God, reaches a turning point due to her dicing with calamity, and



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turns to the Creator God of Israel for love and protection by the God of Naomi, the Israeli God and proclaims, *“Do not plead with me to abandon you, to turn back from accompanying you; for where you go, and where you spend the night, I will spend the night. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May Jehovah do so to me and add to it if anything but death should separate me from you.”* Those were golden words from someone who had heard about the protection God offered in the house of Israel. In your worst of times, remember that God would want to see you run into His hand. Most people the world over have found salvation in the hand of the Lord after a close shave with nasty experiences of life. Today, they are happy for their mishaps. The mishaps led them into the house of the Lord where today they are enjoying endless happiness in the hands of the Lord.

Now, like Naomi and Ruth, the worst of times have gone away with all of your inheritance. They robbed you of your loved possessions. You have lost your husband, your children, your crops, your livestock, your happiness etc. but, they have come to give you a reminder, a reminder that you wandered astray from the protection of your true God. You have forgotten your Great God who fought battles for you, who crossed rivers with you and smote the enemy for you. Turn back, now, and go back to the land of Bethel, the land of Israel and get His usual protection and His caring love.

As for Ruth, a foreigner, when she stepped into the house of the Lord, her worst of times turned into her best of times. God treated her with favour and laced her latter days with gold, fame and honour. She got a wealthy, loving husband, Boaz. And God honoured her for turning to Him in her calamity. She became a great, great grandmother of Jesus Christ! What an honour to them that turn to God in the hour of their need. They quickly rise to the best of their times in the hand of the Lord. The Lord becomes the pendulum that carries you to the other end of life. In your calamity, seek for Him

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through your faith, He will deposit you into a place of success, your best of times and you won't forget Him. You will bear witness of the goodness of the Lord all the days of your life.

Abraham trembled, his voice quivered, as his son, Isaac, asked, “*Here is the altar and the wood but where is the lamb for sacrifice?*” And he answered his son Isaac with a shacking voice as he faced reality, “*God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice.*” Get into Abraham's shoes by looking at your beloved child right away and feel for him as he grabs his beloved son, ties him up, lays him on the altar and with a ram-shackled hand lifts up his knife, ready to obey God's command. Can you do that to your lovely child? That should have been a dark moment for Abraham but through faith, his belief in the Lord's ability, he trusted in the Lord even when all human reasoning had reached the apex of human capacity, wondering whether it was the Creator God or something else requesting for the sacrifice. Back home, everyone called Abraham a lunatic, a murderer who needed secular punishment. At that very moment, when his trust in the Lord was heavily invested, a voice called from the heavens above, “*Abraham, refrain your hand!*”

What a relieving moment for a period that had been looking gloomy, ever since God called for Isaac's sacrifice. Abraham's sacrificial giving of his only child who even came at old age is record giving. It surpasses all human reasoning. There he is, making history from what initially looked like the Creator God was out of his way to ask him to murder his son. I can imagine how Abraham's face lit with happiness as the Creator God provided a ram for the task at hand. In my life I have been involved in nerve-breaking situations. Your soul goes down under and yearns for relief. The moment you get the relief, you feel that a heavy load has been lifted from you. You feel greatly relieved and, smiling and happiness comes naturally and joins you in celebration. My situations are nowhere closer and comparable to Abraham's situation involving the killing of his own child.

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If there is anything parents love, it is their children. Parents do everything possible to protect their children. His gloom turned into absolute happiness the moment he heard the relieving voice. I can hear Abraham telling other elderly men back in the village how the Creator God had provided a ram, at last. I can see him gathering all the people in the village and himself recounting the happenings of the journey and how the Creator God eventually provided a ram. I can hear young Isaac innocently calling out, “We saw a ram tucked between the branches of a tree.”

Those who had lampooned at him as he took his son for “murder” just wondered and shamed themselves for having laughed at him initially. Those who trust in the Lord, will be through their worst of times but for a season only, and will soon cross to their seasons of happiness. The coming of the season of darkness is not a problem. The problem crops up if you then fail to catapult yourself out of them for the best of times. It was that harrowing experience faced by Abraham that gave glory to the Lord. It was that nasty experience to Abraham that proved to all the villagers back then that the Creator God is a giver to those who trust in Him. That dreary situation to Abraham today gives hope to a hopeless world. It is that horrible situation that proves beyond doubt for this generation of non-believers that there is a Creator God up in heaven. Has your life given glory to the Creator God through the very worst things you face in a world that has lost the taste of love. No matter what, let God be glorified by whatever happens to you. Even when you are in tears, let the name of the Lord be glorified. Your reward for trusting Him even in wild situations is great. Abraham got his reward instantly. You too will get yours instantly for investing your trust in God in times when only gloom is the order of the day.

The usually quiet village of Bethany suddenly jerked into a hive of activity. People were already busy with their lives, ready to forget all about Lazarus, who was already four days down under, ready for the

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underground metamorphosis! Villagers from Bethany and beyond arrived in bus-loads to see for themselves! It was shocking and unbelievable news that Lazarus had come back to life. There was jostling for having sight of a man who had been in the grave for four days and was already stinking, but had risen back to life, rejuvenated, the smell of death and the stinking all gone! Sure enough, he was looking healthier than before. People around could easily notice his radiant face and body, more radiant than before he died. There was no sign he was once thin to the marrow due to disease. But, since his calling from the grave, his body looked rejuvenated like a youth untouched by the scourge of acne, his eyes cast a new lease of life. The diseased body they saw before he died was gone, to where, they could not tell! They all wanted to see for themselves the miracle right in their midst!

Some were terribly afraid of talking to a once dead man and kept a distance from him, yet the brave ones came closer to him, with timidity, of course, and with all imaginable eagerness, quizzed him, *“Lazarus, how does it feel like to die? Is it painful? Did you see God and how does He look like? Did you see those who departed before you? Did you see us when you were dead.....?”* There are so many questions than answers when it comes to the subject of death today like through all the ages. Lazarus had fallen sick to the point of dying and, eventually burial, the final seal ending his earthly life. It was a dreary situation for his sisters who looked up to Lazarus. They wept bitterly as Lazarus was being laid in his eternal resting place.

They had waited seasons for Jesus to come to his rescue until Lazarus’ dear life withered off and went with the wind. When Jesus arrived at the scene, where Lazarus was buried, and the pendulum that had stopped in his life swung and moved the other side, and started ticking again for him. As soon as the strings binding him had been removed, he walked towards Jesus and smiled the smile of an angel and wove good-bye to death that had laid its fetters around

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him. Jesus smiled back and thanked the Father in Heaven and glorified Him. Gloom that had precariously hung over the whole village was instantly converted into untold happiness as wild ululations for believers erupted up into the air. Suspense and disbelief rocked the non-believers, as Lazarus took back to his steps with new vigour and called for his earthly possessions that had already been shared among relatives! What a turn of events, from tears for fears into tears for joy.

Lazarus sang songs of praise and worshipped the Almighty and continued with his life as usual, as people from all walks of life sought for his glimpse. He instantly became a tourist attraction on his own. If Lazarus hadn't gone through the grave, which became the epitome of his worst of times, he would not have had space in the tightly packed annals of biblical history. But, that going through the grave and coming back to earthly life in human flesh, was a miracle that galvanised the hearts of many into believing in Jesus. As for Lazarus, his place in history is guaranteed. He conquered the grave when it had already said "done" on Lazarus. I tell you, my brother, the worst of your times are representative of Lazarus' grave meant to instil you with paralysing fear. But, I tell you, you will come out of that grave, your worst of times and live again, with a new cast of life. Your eyes will be sharper than before. Your step will be like that of a healthy teenager. Your neighbours will make a tourist attraction out of you as you stroll with emphasis into a new life, the best of your times. Let the worst of your times bring you the golden opportunity to take you to the highest echelons of society.

My brother, your hour of ridicule, your hour of need, your hour of darkness carries your crown if you endure till the morning. Never lose hope. Never keep your eye from your vision. The more the worst of times press you, the more you should take massive action towards achieving your vision. Pursue your vision until it cries for mercy. Jesus pursued his vision of glorifying the Father and pursued

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that vision with ruthlessness. At Bethany, it was a ruthless tackle with the forces of the worst of times that He turned into the best of times. This world is not a kind world, at all. Only those who are ruthless with money and their visions will see the other side of the coin. Only those who are ruthless with darkness will see light. Only those who are ruthless with their worst of times will see their best of times. Care cares for the careful. Success comes to those who are success conscious. Therefore, the worst of times are the best of times to those who are best-of-times inclined. The worst of times can be the worst of times to those who are worst-of-times inclined.

Under the seizure of the Holy Spirit, prophet Ezekiel saw useless, dry bones in a valley. The bones were already of no use as they lay heaped in the valley. The worst that can ever happen to you is being a dry bone: an untenable situation. People had tried to salvage life once it was still there but it was all a futile exercise. The persons died instead, despite all the effort that was exerted to save their lives. The useless bodies were thrown away, and the flesh corrupted leaving behind bones that dried due to the length of time underground. In your worst of times, God comes to you and says, *“I, the Lord God, promise to open your graves and set you free.....My Spirit will give you breath, and you will live again. I will bring you home, and you will know that I have kept my promise. I, the Lord, have spoken.”* Ezekiel 37:12-14. The Lord promises to take you from your worst of times and bring you to your natural home, the best of times. The worst of times are foreign to us, no wonder they stress us. Our true home is the best of times in the wing of the Lord. Surely, when God carries you on his wings like an eagle, He will safely lay you down at the door-step of your best of times and you will have a testimony to the world. You will create history!

Tarry not my brother, everything has a season: your season of bad times will soon pass and give way to your best of times season. Exert gargantuan effort towards achieving your goal, despite the attendant

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season of lack. Achieving your goal after silencing the angriest of seas is the sweetest song you can sing to the weary world. The world needs your story to crank its dry bones and move forward. Don't be shy to tell your story to the world. Our testimonies are different. Daniel's testimony differs completely from that of Ruth and Naomi. Neither does Prophet Jonah's testimony match that of Abraham. They all differ from each other. Tell yours like it is. That is your history. Don't twist it to please people. Belt it out the way it is and give glory to God. God never created us for mediocrity. We are made in His likeness, and the Psalmist, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, concurs, "...*you are gods*". That being the case, as a "god," turn your worst of times into your best of times by picking salient lessons from them and create your sweetest times from them. Use your worst of times to propel you into someone great. Abraham Lincoln was spurred by the worst of times-failure. The history of the Who is Who in this world is incomplete without Abraham Lincoln.

The more Peninnah looked down upon Hannah and lampooned her for barrenness, the more Hannah knocked at the door of the Lord, feeling insurmountable pressure from Peninnah on her back. Peninnah had become a roaring lion in her life. She had torn into her heart a thousand times breaking it asunder with her scolding of her. Hannah could hardly eat. She could hardly laugh. Her nights were sleepless and too long. Her daytime was too long, too! There was nowhere for her to hide, except once in a while, pour her heavy heart onto the listening ears of Elkanah, her husband. Her days were dreary and lifeless. But, soon that dreariness will turn into happiness, as God turns the tables by hearkening of Hannah's plea.

One day, at the height of her sorrow, she wept bitterly before Elkanah, as he sacrificed to the Lord, and after the sacrifice was done, she "*got up and went to pray.*" 1 Samuel 1: 9-11. "*Hannah was broken-hearted and was crying as she prayed: Lord-All Powerful, I am your servant, but I am so miserable! Please let me have a son. I will give him to you for as long as*

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*he lives, and his hair will never be cut.....I am not drunk, and I haven't been drinking. But I feel miserable and terribly upset. I have been praying all this time, telling the Lord about my problems."* Peninnah, a square peg in a square hole in her problems, ruthlessly pushed Hannah to a corner and looked down upon her because of barrenness and pressed her hard like grapes in a wine press. Hannah was like an orange being pressed to release its juice. Without pressing, the juice doesn't come out! Hannah, despite the monumental pressure on her, never lost sight of the Lord. The more the pressure was exerted on her, the more she knocked at the steps of the house of the Lord, emptying her heart and making her vows before the Lord.

She vividly knew the Lord was her refuge. God was her shelter in the time of storms in her life and she went before the Lord, her heavy heart wearing her down, and emptied her burden onto the Lord. Refreshing words ricocheted into her ears, "*You may go home now and stop worrying. I'm sure the God of Israel will answer your prayer,*" said Eli the High Priest. In a while, she was with baby in her hand, smiling all the way to the temple. Her heart throbbing with untold happiness. It was all tears of sorrow before, all along the way, but now, the Lord had wiped them away and brought laughter onto her face, laced with tears of joy! Elkanah was relieved, too! Hannah could not help it, but be thankful to Peninnah for insidiously pushing her into the hand of the Lord. She realised how important Peninnah had been into the complex matrix leading to Samuel's birth. She remembered how important Joseph's brothers had been to him by ill-treating him and landing him into the hand of the enemy. Your worst of times, if you work through them with neck-breaking effort and intense focus on your vision, will end the best of your times. They will push you to your rightful position in society. The break of dawn will come with your best of times and dew for your morning refreshment.

World celebrated Doctor of Spiritual healing, Prophet Shonai Mamvura, had nothing in his hand but a praying spirit, when God



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called him. He was young and tender. His earthly schooling was disturbed by the Holy Spirit for “ministry jungle schooling.” He toiled for 32 years in the African jungle under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit. His days in the African jungle were days of great lack. He led a pauper-man’s life in those years. That was his going through the Lord’s oven. But, today, the globe bows down at his feet and hails him as a great Prophet sent by God. His fire-brand ministry, Shiloh International Congregation Ministries, has become a force to reckon with the world over. Those hard times begat a world-class Prophet and messenger of God. He faced ridicule amongst his own but endured until the break of dawn. Where he is today? Some say he is an overnight success. There is nothing like that. He toiled in the jungle for three decades yet others perched themselves in the warmth of their homes. God, the Rewarder of men, has bestowed him with honour and fame and everywhere he goes, people call him King Shiloh. He is now a king among kings, commanding honour and respect wherever he goes.

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# FAILURE, THE GREATEST MOTIVATOR

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## CHAPTER TWO

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### POEM ON FAILURE

*'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 have been disgraced-it does mean you were willing to try.*

*Failure doesn't mean you do not 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 have wasted your life-It does mean that you have a reason to start afresh.*

*Failure doesn't mean you should give up-it does mean you should try harder.*

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*Failure doesn't mean you'll never make it-it does mean it will take a little longer.*

*Failure doesn't mean that God has abandoned you-it does mean that God has a better idea."*

*By Dr. Robert Schuller*

Dr. Robert Schuller provided what I term the “panacea” to failure. The mention of the word failure summarises it all. It means the end of it all. In our society, a few years after independence in the 1980s, completing “O” Level was the in-thing. Those who passed “O” Level were glorified. Those who failed it were chastised and labelled “failures” and that summarised it all. They were treated as useless people, dry bones. They became outcasts in our society. Nothing else was ever expected from them. The society was punitive in those days. It did not give them another chance to try. Yet, when we were in the first grade we used to sing: “*Try, try, try again, if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again....!*” It was realised some years later that they could re-sit for the exams, pass them and go on to do greater things in life. And those who re-sat for the exams and passed went on to do even greater things in life. When we were at university we came face to face with failure and re-sits were a common thing. We had to change the exam strategy after failure and surely we made it on second or third attempt. We tested failure to succeed but never gave up and we made it to the final line.

The sting of “failure” is so great that it demarcates the cleavage between never and ever. The word “failure” has broken the hearts

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of many enthusiasts into a thousand pieces leaving them reeling under despondence and, in some worst cases, moral decadence finds its way after unexpected failure has knocked at the door of an expectant enthusiast. In reality, there is nothing like failure but feedback. Failure has two sides-the negative side, which is the stronger of the two sides and the positive side which appears the weaker of the two sides. The positive side to failure tends to have less appeal between the two sides when one meets with failure. The word failure is a very strong word, carrying with it in most cases, very strong negative connotations that easily break the willing heart, leaving only weeds where zeal once had found abode.

What we term failure is actually nothing but direct feedback that you did something in a certain way, that gave you certain results, the results which you wanted otherwise. The results are the output from your input or action. The results never deviate from the course of input you undertook. There is a direct relationship between input and output. What we term failure is simply a feedback message saying to you that you did not do it the way that would produce the results you wanted. You got results from your actions but the results are not what you wanted them to be like. The results you got are in tandem with the action you took. The results are correct and are in line with the way you did the action you took. What we term failure is a statement that simply says: Do it over and over again each time in a different manner until you get the results you intend to get. Otherwise, all your actions are producing correct results but they are

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not the ones you want, which means that the action taken is not the correct one.

It is high time the world accepts to use positively charged words like “feed-back” instead of strongly, negatively charged words like “failure.” Those who were stung by the sting of failure and believed that there is failure went on to become “real failures,” but those who denied, vehemently, to be labelled failures, went on to march to the finishing line with distinction, proving that there is nothing like failure but feedback that do it again, always, but differently until you get what you want. I reiterate, an anatomy of feedback from action taken reveals that there are two sides to feedback always: analysis of feedback with a negative, heavy inclination towards glorifying failure and analysis of feedback with a strongly positive inclination towards the glorification of the positives on feedback, no matter the level of deviation from the desired outcome.

Analysis with a strongly negative inclination and glorification of failure will break the will in a person and raze it down. It has a problem of paralysing enthusiasm and the will to try again. The mind stops trying and shuts off what could otherwise turn out, with persistence, to be a feat. In Texas, everything is big. Big failure carries big lessons for success among the Texans. Success is big, too. It is glorified with its lessons for others. That is living for others. If you meet with failure and park there you will be stingy with lessons learned from failure. Don't park there. Take the lessons from your failed project, share with others and retake the project with untold

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ferocity. We now live in an age with massive information explosion. It is high time the world looks at all feedbacks with a positive eye for the betterment of mankind. Your failure, when looked from a positive point of view, will inspire the whole world. We will soon look at Abraham Lincoln, a man who failed umpteenth times but never lost the spirit of trying again until one day, he made it!

In this chapter, the crux is to pluck leaves of encouragement and conjure into life the spirit of never, never, ever out of the lives of some “heroes,” who faced with insidious failure, but failed to yield to its sting by recognising and giving honour to it and made history in this world. Today, they stand tall as heroes and the world worships at their shrines. At one time, an intended romantic affair didn’t work out and it flopped, flat on its face. You came tumbling down because it failed. You drooped your head glorifying failure, and failure praised you for recognising it by giving it glorification. Look at that incident, you once termed a failure again today, this time with a scorn on failure and a heavy lean on its positives, the positives being the lessons the incident taught you in that failed incident and give thanks to the Lord for its happening to you, then you will start moving forward. To be successful, see the golden lining in every failed venture. If you analyse every failed venture with a positive attitude, picking up the root causes of failure in that venture, you will never go wrong. You will realise that there is nothing like failure but feedback, which is an opportunity for you to set things right. Everything, no matter how bad it is, carries with it a silver lining salient for your growth and moving forward. All the successful

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people in our midst are successful not because they did not fail. They failed several times but learned important lessons from failure and faced their failed ventures with more vigour and a raring spirit to come out victors.

If you fail, do a root-cause analysis of the causes of your failure to come with the results you wanted in the first place. A simplified version of what is called a Root Cause Analysis, which can assist you, can simply be like this:

### **A ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Root cause of failure to get intended results</b>	<b>Corrective Action Taken</b>	<b>Preventive Action Required</b>	<b>Who</b>
1.1.18	Target of 300 units per man hour unachieved by day-end.	There were two break-downs of machines disrupting production	The machine has since been repaired	Carry out scheduled maintenance of the machines	Maintenance Manager



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1.1.18	High value construction tender nearly snatched by a competitor.	There was slow response by the new Engineer to the advertisement.	The new Engineer has been educated on how to quickly respond to advertisements.	A committee has been set up to run with tenders and report to the new Engineer.	Engineer
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Some people failed cavalcades of times but they took their failures as learning curves and they picked important lessons from them and did what they wanted to do differently until they arrived at their intended destinations. Each time they failed, they gained experience on how not to do it and they changed the way they did it and did it differently thereafter and harvested intended results at day-end. Never be scared away by failure. Failure is the beginning of success. It is a necessary step towards the attainment of success.

This world, from time immemorial, is engineered in a queer way. It never sees the ability in a person but failure. The magnetic pull of the word failure is the strongest force that snares people, except some societies which have worked massively to institute paradigm shifts in the mentalities of their people. In our society, most people still glorify the word “can’t” to alarming proportions. Can and can’t are the oldest words in human vocabulary, but they require the greatest thoughts. A child yet to develop speech will allude to agreeing with you by nodding their head. If they don’t want, they shake their head in disagreement. That shows you how strong and powerful the words can and can’t are. The word can’t always fights for supremacy over can and seems to win the battle in uncountable occasions unless the mind has been refocused to appeal to the word can. Success and

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failure happen in the mind. What wins in the mind between the two masters manifests physically. More often, can't wins the battle, burying can down under.

Mankind's propensity is skewed towards negations. Even young children quickly pick negative words ahead of positive words. That indicates the strength of negativity over positivity. It is the duty of society to refocus the mind of a juvenile into the positive territory. That is the purpose of moral laws. The same kind of required teaching is necessary for adults when they meet with calamity. Most of adults have not yet learned to refocus the campuses of their minds into navigating in the positive territory, always. Focussing on the negative territory drains power and the will to move on. As adults, it is imperative to learn to tune minds into the positive territory. If the world achieves that, it would all be a great achievement for mankind. The world quickly tells you, "***You Can't,***" with underlined emphasis. "***Yes, You Can,***" is faintly heard from the minds of the superlatively, negatively charged world: even the positively charged world pronounces it faintly, with no energy whatsoever in it. This kind of teaching and respect to the negatives keeps the world locked in poverty and mediocrity.

The phrase, "***Yes, we can,***" carried with it the untold power of a super-charged hungry lion as Barack Obama constantly repeated it in his blazing campaigns for the American Presidency, some few years back. It inspired and burnt his heart and that of his followers like activated hydrogen bombs, as his team roared mightily right

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across the US. He was black and looked down upon by his opponents who considered themselves white and better positioned for the position of the American Presidency than him. His positively charged phrase inspired many across the globe when eventually, he ascended to the throne at the White House on the backdrop of America's record racism for non-whites. That was the making of history. History has preserved a place for him in its pages as the first American black President.

No-one ever thought that a non-white would ascend to that position. He has opened uncountable avenues for all those who considered themselves inferior to others. But, he made it and cast a spell of smiles on the faces of the down-trodden in the US. That memorable night, when Barack Obama accepted the American Presidency, I saw on television tears streak down the cheeks of people like waterfalls. Blacks in America hardly believed it. It was a centuries-old dream come true for Obama who, that night became the incarnation of all blacks. All the second class citizens in America and the world at large looked up to Obama to wipe away their problems. Africa was at the forefront with its baskets of mind-boggling problems. It was an unforgettable night for the world's hopeless billions across the globe. The ascendancy of Obama into the highest office in the American land raised hopes for the world's hopeless lot. He was able to turn a decades old dream into reality and even took it to greater heights. American black dreamers who departed long ago could not help it but stir, salute and turn in their graves! That was great Mr Obama! Your bravery stirs the world. The world's hope is resurrected by your

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feat in human history. No matter your circumstances, rise up to the occasion and achieve beyond what man thinks. Obama was black and despised. He was under colour bar. But, he gave a spirited fight, closed his ears and fixed his eyes on his goal of ascending to the highest throne. He made it. You too are no exception. Focus on your goal despite all the negative words that protrude from failure-inclined people. Success is yours if you work hard, despite all the negatives.

*“My teachers used to call me a failure,”* Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister, was once quoted saying. That is one tragedy that has sent man to the grave unfinished. Some people have been called failures and they have believed it and have dismally failed to produce results they wanted. You are what you believe in. If you believe in success, you will succeed. If you believe in failure, you will surely fail. The world will rate you a failure but don't fail yourself. Don't believe in it. Those who were lampooned and labelled failures at one time or the other but went on to prove their real worth have gone on to create history for themselves. If the world calls you names, it is a wake-up call to rediscover yourself and unleash the potential in you with no apology. Tony Blair was called a failure but he did not fork any money to invest his attention into that. He marched on and became the British Prime Minister, yet those who labelled him failure earlier on watched him with awe. Who then was the real failure? The world doesn't know them. The world knows Tony Blair. He commanded one of the strongest military forces under the sun. They called him a failure but with the effluxion of time, he could sign their death sentence. Never, ever be lied to. You are endowed with

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ferocious power and ability to achieve whatever you want. The worst of your times will take you to your destiny of which you are able to decipher the right codes from it.

Albert Einstein, a brilliant physicist, revolutionised the way the world viewed the universe. He had a passion for the truth. He was highly talented and passionate about it and he produced a series of equations that overturned some of the most basic assumptions about the nature of the universe. His theories of relativity joined time, space, matter, and energy in ways that had never been imagined before. He subsequently sought to prove mathematically his belief in the underlying unity of all existence. But, his childhood is in great contrast to what he did in later years. He couldn't speak until he turned four. He didn't write until he was seven years old. At school, his teachers called him "*slow*" and "*mentally handicapped.*" He had none of that and went on to be the greatest scientist so far to roam the face of the earth! It is a great surprise that most of the great personalities who have shaken the world in one way or the other were called failures by their teachers. This only tells me that our education system needs a total revamp to recognise the real talents in individuals. Otherwise, teachers will continue labelling all would be great people failures, only to be shocked as the child wakes up one day and roars like an angered lion and sets the world alight by his achievements.

The implications of his discovery were earth-shaking, helping explain the mysterious energy released by radioactivity. Albert Einstein

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thought dangerously, acted dangerously in the face of resistance and scorn but etched his name in the sands of history. Later on, the same academic world that identified him initially as slow and mentally handicapped identified him later as a highly talented physicist. If you close your ears and march on to your goal, the world will hail you great when at one stage it called you a failure. Einstein never gave ear to the skewed assessment of his early teachers. If the world calls you a failure, ignite your heart and mind and set goals that when you achieve them, you will wonder how you did it. Get possessed by the spirit of achieving great things. The education system will chuck you out, but life needs you with that label on your back. Turn that label into something great for mankind, the same mankind who labelled you a failure. Struggle bitterly with your worst of times and march on to victory. Heroism is born out of a struggle.

Richard Branson, a British tycoon, also faced the same kind of negative, destructive comments in his early life but he did not invest any single moment of his time into buying into that and today he is a tycoon known all over the world, yet those who labelled him “slow” are never heard of. Let the world call you names. But, my brother, take those comments and turn the tables. The worst of times will just serve to awaken the sleeping giant in you. If Joseph hadn't been sold by his brothers, do you think that he was going to end the Premier in Egypt. The road to fame and fortune is pimpled with thorns. The road to success is long and winding too. The valleys are steep. The mountains are high. But, tarry not. The road to the purification of gold is no mean road. All the impurities are sieved throughout the

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purification process until at long last, you have gold glittering in blinding yellowness. That is what your troubles mean to you. They mean to do away with all the impurities attendant in you. You cannot be up there with all those impurities. You can see success once you have weaned all the impurities in you.

Abraham Lincoln is a shimmering example of someone who handled failure with positivity. It never dawned in his mind that there is anything under the sun called failure. To him, failure meant, as Dr. Robert Schuller advised in his great poem, “*Failure doesn’t mean you a failure-it does mean you haven’t succeeded yet.*” The more he was faced with failure, the more his heart yearned for razing it down and cross to the world of success. Each time he told himself that he had not yet succeeded. “*Failure doesn’t mean you have been a fool-it does mean you had a lot of faith.*” If Abraham Lincoln had any chance to read this poem, I bet he would read it several times, each time the poem spurring him on. It scorched his heart the more he failed, knowing fully that one day he was going to make it. His story inspires all who want to climb to the highest echelons of society, despite the roar of failure all along the way. Failure is a barking toothless bulldog but, its roar awakens you up. You will not sleep on the wheel. Let’s take a snap look at Abraham Lincoln’s record denial of failure until he pulled it down and sat on its chest, wielding his victorious hand over its ugly head:

- Lost his job in 1832
- At age 21, failed in business
- At age 22, was defeated in a legislative race

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- At age 24, failed again in business
- In 1834, was elected to legislature
- In 1835, overcame the death of his sweetheart, Ann Rutledge
- In 1836, at age 27, had a nervous breakdown
- In 1838, he was defeated for Speaker
- At ages 34 and 36 lost congressional races
- Lost a senatorial race at age 45
- Failed in an effort to become vice-president in 1856
- Again, defeated for senate, in 1858, at age 49
- In 1860, at age 52, he was elected President of the US

What a record! Very few people can beat that record. His focus and vision for leading the US was strong, intense and burning. Legend has it that he had one principle for greatness: whatever he had to do he put his mind into it and held it all there until it was all done. If you meet with bad times, apply yourself whole-heartedly to solving the problem and surely, you will cross to the other side and see the best of times. Your worst of times have brought an opportunity for greatness upon you. Take it that way and use all the resources around you for accomplishing your solving of the challenges ahead of you, that will make you great. Your story, like that of Abraham Lincoln, of overcoming your obstacles, must be told to the hungry for success world. The world will pluck a leaf out of your problem-solving ability and solve their own problems too, inspired by you. As the pendulum of life carries you from life's negativities to its positivities, make yourself great by making others great through your testimony.



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Empower others by ruthlessly fighting the worst of your times. The world will emulate how you did it and solve its own problems. The world will make you a hero for leading a demonstration on fighting hard the worst of your times to cross the road to the best of your times.

Some people have a tendency of being shy to tell the world their stories. No matter how bad it is, tell it to the world and you will be great. That “badness” in it carries with it a seed for your greatness. Nice stories have less impact on people than bad stories. Worse stories inspire the world. Journalists apply this principle of focussing on negative stories to make huge sales. Nice stories don’t make money. Nice stories don’t make history. In the same vein, nice stories don’t really make good, moving testimonies. Even God, when he realised how bad the earth had become, he sent his child Jesus Christ to salvage the earth from the worst of times into the best of times. If the world had been nice, there was no need for Jesus to descend from high places into the earth. Jesus taught mankind that he had descended for the unrighteous. That was his burning vision: To make the Father known to the unrighteous world. Rowdy people, when they convert to the kingdom of heaven, they become champions in that kingdom. Paul was a murderer, but the energies were re-channelled towards working for God. He wrote more Bible books than any other writer. His riotous behaviour made him a befitting candidate in God’s kingdom. That negation in you befits you for something great in this world. Let the bad times ruffle your mighty

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power and bring out what you have stored up in you. God never created you for mediocrity but dizzy heights that glorify God, too.

If the world were all righteous, there was no need for Jesus to descend from the heavenly bliss into this dark world. When he roamed the face of the earth, he left the world in a better state, despite the resistance that cropped up against his revolutionary way of doing things. He had straight talk that shook the religious set up of the day. But, despite all the attendant negative situations around him, emanating from the religious set-up of the day, he conquered his worst of times and marched on to sit at the right hand of the Father. He had done all the demonstrations on how the world could do it to be at par with God's expectations. His demonstrations faced unparalleled resistance and scorn! If all the stories of great people had been hidden, how would we have heard about their greatness? Greatness is born out of a struggle. Great kings became great after fighting great wars and won them when it seemed impossible. Some people have braved themselves and told the world how they were raped at gun-point and the world worships at their feet. That story you said to the world helped someone, somewhere, one day under the sun. They got encouraged by your recount of the dreary situation in your life. They found they were not alone in calamity. They felt relieved by your story. Your worst of times will one day help a needy someone.

Sometime ago I was feeling down. I saw everything crumbling around me after I had had a terrible accident which resulted in two

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souls perishing. I was deep into it tearing myself apart over its happening and asking myself why it happened to me that way. It was really a tough time. But, one day, a long-time friend of mine passed by to check on me. He had not heard about the terrible mishap. When I recounted my misfortune to him, he too narrated his close shave with death and the resultant loss of lives of many people in his case. I just felt oooh, I was not alone in the basket of misfortunes. I felt relieved and accepted that something like that could happen to anyone, anytime. Together, we glorified God that day and I moved on with life. Today, I have ministered to many broken hearts through the happening of that terrible incident to me. You too my brother, are no different from that. Take all the negatives that have happened to you and use them as experience to help others. Use those dreary moments of your life to glorify God. The worst of times must never leave you the same. They must revolutionise everything in your life. That is their purpose. They don't just come for the sake of coming but to carry you to another level.

The Devil will use the threat of failure as one great tool to break your willing heart and he knows that once you fail, your enthusiasm dies down. But, to the wise, it is the complete reverse. Failure simply means do it in a different way always until you get what you want. Humans learn through their mistakes, even those of others provide wonderful lessons to everyone. Remember Dr Robert Schuller's great poem on feedback from failure. "*Failure doesn't mean you'll never make it-it does mean it will take a little longer.*" Never ever be terrified by failure. Failure is like an owl that frightens you with pseudo-horns.

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It's no horns but a bunch of feathers meant to instil fear in you. It will take time to achieve what you want but you will achieve it. Failure will sharpen your horns. Next time you do it you will be wiser. That is all there is with the worst of times-to sharpen you so that you become a better person.

Jack Ma, the richest man in China today and founder of the Alibaba Group, a gigantic business force to reckon with, faced bad times in his early life. He came from a poor family but to him that was no excuse at all. He coined his own strategies to weave a path to the land of success and laughter. He assisted tourists for free to improve his English in his early life. Afterwards, he started applying to different colleges but was rejected by each of them. After those series of rejections, where he was always told, "*You are no good,*" he told himself, "*Someday I should go teach there.*" Instead of recoiling and folding himself into the arms of failure, the rejections made him stronger and he told himself, "*Someday I should go teach there.*" What a spirit! The spirit of Abraham Lincoln, a never, never surrender spirit, a spirit that has seen man rise from the fetters of dust into dizzy heights of achievement, is the correct spirit. You too my brother, I know you are facing the worst of your times but tell yourself that someday you will rise and take your rightful position in society. You will climb the rungs of success and never look back. The terrible times are nothing but just a wake-up call to success.

This man was shown the door 1009 times. He was 65. He was selling his chicken recipe but he never took it as failure. He met top-level

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rejection. That top-level rejection spurred him on until one day, the wheel turned in his favour. That day was the first page in the history of his success. Even though those who ate his soup for trials quickly showed him the door way, he never stopped trying. He never took NO for an answer. To him, No meant that he needed more trials. To him, NO meant a further honing of his marketing skills. Those failures, those rejections laid a strong foundation of the Kentucky Fried Chicken. Not long after a series of rejections, his worst of times, he bumped onto what he wanted. Kentucky Fried Chicken, a big, world class conglomerate was born: itself a giant testimony that no matter the length of the night, it will end with dawn. And surely, dawn eventually came upon him and everyone labelled him an instant success, including those who quickly turned him away. People have turned away from multi-million dollar ventures due to the sting of failure, itself a barking toothless bulldog and a necessary step in the pursuit of success. I know of one good salesman who says when his sales day starts with a NO, he knows that that day he can make huge sales. But, if the day starts with a smooth sales, normally that day turns out to be a bad day. No matter how many times misfortune rocks you down, never look back. Never give up on what you are doing. Just behind the sharp curve there is a straight road that leads to where you want.

Galileo Galilei, an Italian physicist {1564-1642}, was born at a time when the church controlled thinking and teaching. His inquisitive mind asked many questions at tender ages that ruffled ancient intellectuals. He ran the risk of being labelled a heretic and in those

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days, the church burnt heretics with all animosity imaginable. Galileo's teachings like those of the great Copernicus seemed to contradict Bible teachings in those days and due to this, his writings were examined by the authorities, resulting in him being forbidden to write on certain subjects. He was tried in 1633 for his writings and his independent thought on the structure and nature of the universe and condemned, and sent for imprisonment under merciful house arrest.

He went blind in 1637, but, despite all the negative forces that carried volleys of bad times to him, restrictive thinking and eventually, the restrictive house arrest, he continued writing on the subjects of philosophy and mathematics despite the heavy restrictions. He contributed a lot to the study of trigonometry, astronomy and geometry. His worst of times never deterred him from applying his great mind into areas that were being perceived otherwise. His persistence during the worst of his times created him a name and place in the history of the great. Today, he is regarded the world over, as an Extraordinary person. History is all about brave individuals who dared stand firm against the status quo. Take a leaf out of Galileo's life, he refused to be restricted in applying his great mind to the things of this earth. The fetters of house rest never restricted his mind. Never let the worst of times take a toll on you. Defy them. Apply your effort wholesomely onto your vision. Take it beyond the house arrest. Take it beyond the walls of failure. No circumstance should preclude you from shaking the world with your achievement.

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Thomas Edison was wild with his dream. He failed innumerable times before he was driven finally, to the discovery of the genius which slept quietly within him. His dangerous thinking led to him creating his name in history. Look at the globes in your room. They testify to his dangerous thinking and acting. The times when he failed ten thousand times spurred him to victory and today, he is a hero under the sun. His heroism stemmed from failure that was converted into persistence. When the pendulum of fame and fortune turned, it deposited him into the land of the best of times. My brother, never let failure turn you off. Don't droop your head because of that failed attempt. All heroes became heroes after a gruesome fight with failure. Some fight their backs out against the head of death that popped up trying to wipe them off the face of the earth. Be the hero to your harrowing experiences. Let your worst of times label you a hero. Let your worst of times spur you on. Let the sting of the worst of times be the fuel that churns the engine of your life into life. Let the engine of your life resurrect into life and start all over again.

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# REJECTION, FRUSTRATION & RESISTANCE

## GREATEST SUCCESS CATALYSTS

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### CHAPTER THREE

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Rejection is a necessary step in the pursuit of success but it needs handling with wisdom. Myriads of people have turned away from would-be lucrative ventures because they were rejected at one point or the other. No and Yes are the oldest words but they require the greatest thoughts. The venom of the word NO by one person should never paralyse the whole of your system. The whole world is waiting to say YES to you. So, don't close the door because someone has said NO. Reflect on the great salesman who used to say when plying his trade if ever anyone said NO that day, he was going to make huge volumes. Any day that started with a YES was a bad day to him. Sales turned to be low that day. The word NO does not carry a sting with it. In fact, it carries the impetus to push you on. It gives you the inertia to go on when others have stopped. After this discussion, you will never back-off, no matter the sting of the worst of times. All heroes have fought against the worst of times. When others scampered and sort for shelter, heroes became bullish and razed on until they laid waste the sting of their foes.

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Women, since time immemorial, have played an unsung significant role in stirring the hearts of man by rejecting their advances. In some particular cases, some women have rejected their husbands, galvanising the rejected man into coining some mind-boggling goals for themselves as a way of revenging and proving to the woman who rejected him that he can set the world on fire. Rejection is excellent! It conjures dead minds into action. The sting galvanises the idle mind and sets it on fire. Welcome rejection when it knocks at your door. The world is filled to capacity with people who, after rejection, went on to achieve what seemed unachievable at first. Rejection carries with it a huge force which if well-manipulated, can see someone set the world ablaze like an activated atomic bomb. Never let rejection wet down your vision. Never waste the scare, valuable resource of time by focusing on why you have been rejected. Grab the rejection by its horns, syphon its energy to your competitive advantage.

Mohammed, the world-over celebrated Prophet and founder of Islam, was born in an impoverished family in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He grew up in the Arabian Desert because his native city Mecca, was dirty and children were sent away into the desert to avoid squalid conditions. He became a herd-boy. He had no formal education. When he was twenty-eight, Khadija, a very rich widow favoured and married him. During his stay with Khadija, Mohammed had many visions while in contemplative trances. It was revealed to him during those trances that there is only but one God. Noticing the decline in Christian influence in those years, one day he told Khadija that Gabriel, the archangel had appeared to him and told him that he was

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to be the Messenger of God. That was the beginning of a strong vision that was to envelop the world.

A herd boy saw at first, Islam in a vision. Islam, in simple terms, means the total submission to the will of God. He determined to lose everything for it. However, it was no easy road for him to travel. The road was pimpled with thorns and many lions roared along the way trying to devour him together with his vision. Burning with that vision, he became a subject of total ridicule, scorn and rejection. Those who rejected him, at first, carried the day yet he folded his tail and obeyed the dictates of the Lord. He was called a lunatic and spat on by those who carried the day in those years. Women threw filth upon him. He was chased from his society and wandered in the Arabian Desert for years. Men would not believe in his mission. His teachings interfered with their ideas. In 622 he was forced to leave the Mecca. This period they referred to as the *Hegira* or the flight. He took refuge in nearby Medina, the “City of the Prophet.”

No one envisioned the spirit and impetus he was giving to Islam in those days. He was just another usual prophet, making noise in the wilderness and the villages around. He never performed a miracle but his life is now a miracle. But today, that forceful religion fills the whole earth. If your vision for your goals is as intense as that of Prophet Mohammad, you will set your eyes on your goals and turn your roaring lions, your challenges into your competitive advantage. Your troublesome times will keep you awake all night long, poking

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you all night long and your enemy will never prosper against you, never.

That burning vision will not be consumed by the worst of times, but, the worst of times will propel you into greater heights. The greater heights will be your best of times. God allowed Mohammad to go through a dreary situation, a dark spot, his worst of times, in his training to be the pure gold that He wanted him to be in the worst of times in order to prune all the impurities in him. The impurities would preclude him from achieving his goals. Mohammad did not pay attention to the lions roaring by his side. He pushed on. The more the people rejected him, the more he preached, until after over ten years, people started paying attention to him. Having been rejected and pushed out of Mecca, Mohammed did not back off. In 630, he fought hard and seized the city of Mecca and the *Kaaba* in Mecca became the holiest shrine of Mohammedanism. Those who had previously pushed him out of Mecca submitted to him as his subjects. Mohammed sat in judgement over his followers. He led his army. He acted as head of state. He brought a kind of religious society that acted as a state. Today, his life is a miracle on its own. A rejected person's life became a miracle. After many years in the desert, a training ground for tougher situations, he founded a world class religion, a religious society that acted as a state whose flame cannot be quenched. The world is ablaze with a religion founded by a subject of ridicule. Profit from the worst of your times.

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Biblical Daniel, like young Joseph in Egypt, was put in charge of the whole Babylonian kingdom. That promotion quoted the eerie of Babylonian natives against a foreigner who had risen to the highest echelons of governance, right in their midst. Not only a foreigner but a captive. Captives were no people. They had no class in society. That a classless person could rise to such levels in the midst of the natives did not please them, save the king. The animosity emanating from that promotion culminated in him earning a death sentence that eventually led him to spending the whole night with starved lions but he came out a victor! The lions looked at Daniel as he unceremoniously landed in their midst for an evening meal and refused for the first time in history, to feed on him. He was too dazzling for an evening meal. He was too hot to handle. The lions ran away from him and stampeded into a corner the whole night, fearing for their lives from his dazzling face. The determination of his case carried a death sentence, but the whole night the death sentence hovered above the heads of the lions themselves. Those who coined his death sentence rejoiced exceedingly as it was being handed down to him, saying it was over for Daniel. Little did they know that they were pushing Daniel into the annals of history!

The Babylonian system had rejected him and his God. That was a nerve-breaking moment, as news spread around town that Daniel was facing the sting of the law, a death sentence. The final hour came when they ignominiously dragged him into the pit, right in front of the all the city dwellers, shoved him in and laid a seal over the entrance of the pit and proclaimed it “done” and sealed. There was

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no doubt, Daniel was history, period. They had concluded, Daniel and his God were gone, never to be heard of under the sun except for some few hours as his colleagues talked one or two things about him and how they had woven his way to the end of his life. They were the victors over a classless foreigner. But, the following morning everyone was shocked, left, right and centre. The course of the river channel had changed. Water was flowing upstream as Daniel victoriously emerged from the hungry lion-filled dungeon, unhurt, the hungry lions saluting and waving him a victorious good-bye.

It had never happened in known history that hungry lions would refuse to feed on any animal, inclusive of humans, given them for an evening meal. Daniel was not the first person to be given to lions as a punitive measure. That was the execution of a death sentence on him, like many others. Myriads of people before and after Daniel perished instantly, in the hands of those fierce, hungry lions. Daniel was no ordinary person. He was clothed in the apparel of the Most High. He clothed himself in gargantuan faith that the lions would not devour him. He was a scotching light to them. Babylonian kings took note of that historical incident and accorded it a place in their history! Jewish history, in line too, took note of his incident and glorified God and him for demonstrating to the world how to turn insurmountable challenges into competitive advantage. The following morning, he was basking in his best of times, as hordes and hordes of people came from all walks of life from the entire kingdom to see the man who had conquered the unconquerable den of lions.

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The world was shaken and woken up by his incident, the first of its kind. The world started believing in possibilities in everything with faith. He changed, out-rightly, the way people dealt their trust in God. My brother, have the worst of your times prepare a den of lions for you. Worry not. That is your way to glory. Before sunrise the following day, history will open a page for you.

One day, I had a vision. In the vision, I saw the Biblical Daniel in the den of lions. In the vision, I just heard a voice tell that the person I was seeking was Daniel. He looked like he was a bulky man. My brother, the following day I was dragged into prison over issues that had arisen at my private learning institution. I spent a single night in prison. But, that night changed the course of my life. That night, as huge lice and some insidious bed bugs feasted on me, I made a decision to expend my huge writing prowess into serving the Almighty through the mouth of a pen. My brother, every adverse situation carries with it a similar seed for success. Had I not made that decision as I lay in prison, you would not be reading this book. In that dungeon, I saw men and women who had been pained to the marrow by the cruel system applied on prisoners, worship God from the abysses of their hearts. God was their only hope, no one else. Some received miraculous release from prison. I can still remember the conversations I carried out with people who faced forty year prison sentences. Forty years facing a gruel-some lifestyle pimpled with hard labour. I just vowed to serve the Almighty in this way. Convert every negative situation into the good for yourself and mankind. Turn the rivers to flow upstream.

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But, humans are not like that. They have not picked the real lessons from the shimmering demonstration by Daniel. Only those who endure the harrowing experiences brought about by bad times when the pendulum of life swings, can live to see the light that protrudes from bad times. The feeble ones pass on before dawn, as bad times, the roaring lions, rock them lock, stock and barrel to their knees and leave them breathless. Don't give up my brother, the worst of times are the best of times. Stand up and shine in your darkest hour. Be a star in your season of leanness. Stars shine when it is dark. The darker it becomes, the brighter stars shine. When there is light, stars hide their faces. Therefore, your worst of times when well-handled, will tell the world that you are a star as you shine everywhere and light all the dark places by conquering the fangs of bad times.

Take it from Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He was a Na-za-rite, someone who devoted his life to entirely saving God. He was rejected and lampooned from the day he was conceived in His mother's womb, up to birth, until, eventually, He was hung on the cross charged with "treason." That treason charge, instead, was in reality treason against the Devil's kingdom. He overthrew the kingdom of the Devil. Today, you and I stand tall because of that treason charge that brought Him to the cross. His worst of times, became his and our best of times. His worst of times gave him the right hand position with our Father in Heaven! His worst of times on the cross set you and me off the hook of eternal condemnation for having the seed of sin. The worst of times come to instruct you to move to the next level, a higher level where your vision will manifest. By hanging on the cross, Jesus'



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vision was clearly manifested that hour. Press on, when bad times give you a lift into their dungeons-never lose heart, glory is just by the corner. After that gravely sharp curve, the road ahead is painstakingly straight. If Esau in the Bible had endured the hunger, he could simply have cooked his own stew and would have kept his birth-right, all to everlasting and would have kept his promise to the wealth ahead of him. But, he did not endure and lost his birth-right.

Endure the night; your business will surely succeed and your goal will be realised. Your season of suffering will come to an end. Everything has a season. Your season of darkness, your worst of times, will give way to the season of light, your best of times. The turning point is just by the corner. The fact that the best of your times are lying ahead of you must resource your energy. The reward embedded in the best of times is far much greater than the morose embedded in the worst of times. The glum is short-lived, but the excitement of the best of times must keep you in hoppity-skippity-hop-motion, pulsating your heart with untold vivacity. Your time on earth is limited. You cannot afford to waste time by focussing on the valueless, bad times which intend to distract you from your potential. Your worst of times, if badly handled, will rob you of your ability to be of value to this world. Go through them, never taking your mind off the excitement of the shimmering best of times ahead of you!

Jesus was ignominiously rejected by the religious circles of his day, but that did not deter him. Instead, the more they resisted, the more powerful he tore through their hard hearts. His teachings were not

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acceptable in His day, like in the days of Galileo. They were considered as teachings of heretics! His teachings were too revolutionary and were in stark contrast to the popular teachings of the day. He had straight talk. The religious leaders opposed him with all animosity and eventually hatched plans to decimate Him and his teachings from the face of the earth. At long last, that plan materialised but the seed that had been planted by Jesus had already taken root and was already burning the world by the time he left this planet. Those who followed his teachings, like him, faced death and many were burnt at the stakes for proclaiming Jesus as their Saviour. There is a period which has been named The Dark Ages.

The period was characterised by insatiable hunger to kill all those who proclaimed Jesus as their leader. Hundreds of thousands of people were burnt in public for following the teachings of Jesus, a heretic. John Huss, one of the gallant followers of “heretic” Jesus, refused to deny Jesus Christ as his Saviour, as the destructive tongues of fiery flames licked him from every angle, putting an end to his earthly life by quickly converting him into ashes. But, His teachings were secretly passed from one believer to the other, in the midst of the insidious resistance that fronted the death sentence as its weapon of fear and destruction. Sending each other the sacred secret teachings was God’s way of preserving the teachings. Today, you and I can lay our hands on the Good News of salvation from sinning but somewhere, someone gave their lives and preserved the news for you. Stand up right now and do your best despite the sting of the worst of times. Erase the sting by giving out your best. You can never

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see the good of the Lord unless you have a close shave with the fangs of bad times. When God rescues you from such bad times, then you will know that he is a great God. A God who feels for those who toil and wallop in un-seeming times.

Some Old Testament scrolls were rolled and shoved into clay pots and hidden in secrete caves to preserve God's word. Most of them are being discovered today, hidden in far-away places like the Dead Sea. They have been generally referred to as The Dead Sea Scrolls. The period from 1947-1954 was a great period of discovery in relation to these scrolls. But, out of that rejection, out of the persecutions in those dark ages, Jesus' history and that of the patriarchs was preserved by one generation after the other until today, it is Jesus Christ all over the face of the earth. The world is healed through Him. Jesus, today, can afford to smile as the whole earth proclaims Him King of Glory, all over the world. It all came out of standing firm in the face of resistance, rejection, ridicule and scorn. Pluck some leaves out of the King of Glory's life and conquer your worst of times. His entire life was a leading demonstration of conquering all forms of negation.

At one time, Henry Ford decided to produce an eight cylinder engine with all cylinders cast in one block and he instructed his engineers to work on it, and the engineers simply answered, "*It's impossible.*" He commanded, "*Go ahead and stay on the job until you succeed no matter how much time is required. Go right ahead. I want it, and I'll have it.*" The engineers went ahead and bumped onto the secret he wanted and

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they came up with the engine design the way he wanted. Command the coming of your best of times. Like Henry Ford, shout, *“I want it, and I’ll have it.”* You will have it for sure, at your command and at the right time that you need it. Demand the coming of your best of times right now, and see them whizzing to you, right now. Henry Ford was in dislike of the engines that were in operation and demanded the design he wanted. Don’t be comfortable with what you don’t want. Don’t be like a frog which when placed in a container with cold water, it instinctively adjusts its body to be in line with the level of the cold water. If the water is heated up, it will adjust, and adjust and adjust. The more the heat, the more it adjusts. That kind of mentality is no good. Don’t conform to the dictates of your worst of times. Don’t ever try to adjust to conform to nasty times. Automatically refuse them and stir a revolution against that which you don’t want. Success can never be realised by conforming. Success comes to lunatics. Success comes to heretics. Success is for trouble makers.

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# RISK-TAKERS, GREATEST WINNERS

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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My propensity is to consume volumes of books on the biographies and auto-biographies of illustrious individuals who have made something of significance in this world for this world and its betterment. Most of these individuals are the ones that fill all history text-books. They all failed or faced risks in various forms at one time or the other, umpteenth times but that did not deter them from forging ahead. The more they failed, the more they forged ahead towards the attainment of their set goals. They took risks that boggled minds of the clever-by-half but out of those mind-boggling risks, in the midst of the worst of times, history pages were opened as the earth rotated relentlessly, season after season. History is rough and selective. It opens its pages to outstanding individuals, who have no mercy when it comes to fighting for their positions in history. Risk averse people have no place in history. Their place in history is only in a single word, “masses,” that’s all.

One great author has written a great book on eighteen successful individuals who were virtually risk takers. In distilling their central tendencies, the author realised one great common characteristic among them all. It is a characteristic possessed by highly successful people, everywhere. They all lived “*as though it were impossible to fail.*” That is one great characteristic needed for those who have met with

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calamity and don't agree with its conditions and want to shake it off, violently and vehemently, and see the beauty of the best of times across the road. Further research has also concluded that during World War II, pilots who played it safe during the course of the war perished and the raspy riders survived! Be rough in the course of the rough times. If you want to play it safe with the worst of times, you will perish. Their teeth will never let you "loose" as they find you comfortable to crush into a thousand pieces. Be sour to your worst of times, they will quickly free you. Be rough in your worst of times. The tough of the worst of times will not handle you. You may have heard that monied people are cold-blooded. That cold-bloodedness is meant to scare poverty away and keep it at bay. The worst of times will find pleasure in chewing you.

Risk in simple terms is the likelihood of failure. In other cases risk may mean the likelihood of losing one's life in carrying out a dangerous exercise. Therefore, where there is that likelihood, someone needs to be careful in how they conduct themselves. And, empirical evidence has long established that the greater the difficulty, the greater the glory. That is, in ventures that carry a higher risk incidence, the returns or profits in tandem, tend to be higher too. Financially, that means the greater the risk, the greater the income in that risky venture. Those who are seasoned in business know this kind of relation very much and go for kills in risky businesses. Once they make their profits, they pull out quickly to avert risk. They tend to have experts who can identify areas where risk could occur. Once they do that, they measure the size of risk and take preventive actions

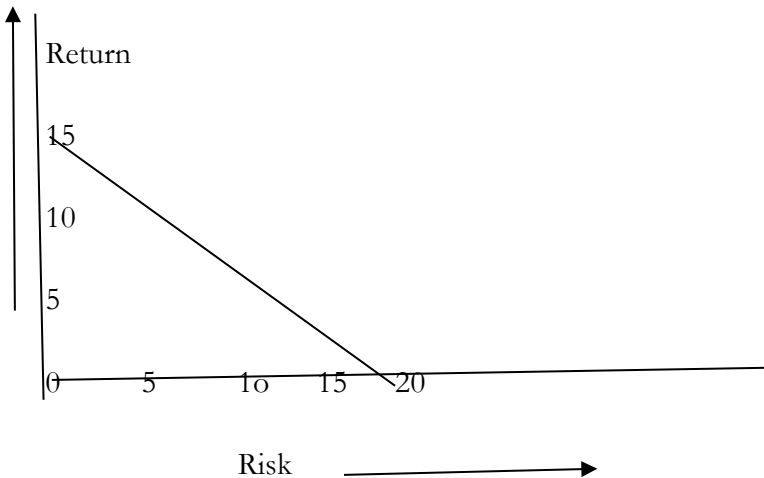


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to avert the risk. If it's unavoidable and of high incidence, they may pull out to avert damages and losses.

I have drawn you below a simplified mathematical version of the proportional relationship that exists between risk and return:

### **The Risk-Return Relationship**



In this simplified version of the risk-return relationship, the more the risk you take, the higher the return and vice-versa. That is, the less the risk, the less the profits. As I said earlier on, businesses that carry high risks have high returns too. Even in the job-market, jobs that carry with them high life risks are well-rewarding to those who accept them. Less risky jobs have low pay-outs as well. If you play it safe by avoiding risk-taking, you will remain on the down-side, the worst times forever, yet the rough riders when they meet with calamity and play in a never-apologising manner, are be able to see the best of

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times, with the effluxion of times. This world requires no apology to be a winner. It respects the brave. The feeble-hearted are trodden upon and left for dying. Lions are the winners, always. A lion never apologises when it ravages a gazelle for a meal.

It insidiously tears it apart into a thousand pieces in no time. If you are tender-hearted, you may ask why God did it that way that one animal mercilessly tears another into uncountable pieces in a flash. That being the case, if the lion doesn't do that, it starves and perishes. That is the rule of the jungle! It is no different from the rule of the worst of times. The worst of times require no apology. They demand playing of hard ball, nothing else! If you play soccer and you are a rough-rider, all your opponents will respect you and in most cases, you do what you want on the football pitch. Those who dare try to snatch the ball from you risk being broken into a thousand pieces before they access the ball.

If the playing of your hard ball is prayer, then ruthlessly pray. If your hard-ball is faith in your abilities to solve that problem that has entangled you with dark clouds around you, then ruthlessly exercise the faith and see the heralding of your dawn. If your hard ball playing is massive action, then take it with no apologising spirit. The lion is the king of the jungle by what it does. A feeble lion is easily attacked by hyenas. It will soon starve to death as hyenas snatch food from its jaws every-time it makes a kill. All dwellers of the veld know that the lion is a killer and they shiver in the sight of a lion. The smell of a lion spells death. You too, can be the king of your worst of times.

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When your worst of times smell you, they must tremble and seek for shelter as you roar, demanding your better days. As you roar and trample upon the bad times, never apologise. Apologising is for the weak as much as crying is for women.

Cut off the insidious head of the worst of times like David decapitating Goliath and pompously move to better times and teach the world how to do it. David carried the head of Goliath, the stumbling block for all Israel in a plate. You too, can cut-off the head of your worst of times, by putting their head in a plate. That plate will take you to the palace by end of day today. The world is languishing in trouble. It dearly needs your demonstration on how to silence the worst of times like David silencing the marauding Philistines. It is a fact of life that companies in highly competitive businesses study the lion's ruthless strategies and apply them directly onto their competitors. The competitors too, find ways of outwitting their lions, their competitors, for them to see the dawn of the following morning. If you don't cut-off the head of your worst of times, the worst of times will cut you off and enslave all your people. Cut them off and catapult yourself into higher positions by silencing your worst of times.

Most great writers the world-over turned to writing after they had been ditched by those who had, at first, gone with their hearts to heaven but later dumped them and left their hearts to the wind. The wind carried the hearts away, breaking them asunder each time they bumped onto trees and rocks. Dogs too, sniffed the broken hearts

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and injected untold paralysis into the lives of the dejected. That was an opportunity for nature to resurrect the dead writing talent in most of them and when the “dead” talents were awakened, the world wondered, in awe, as a simple lad roared and achieved seemingly unachievable feats. The world harvested cavalcades of thick minds that could see the invisible. The broken hearts harvested ideas from the hissing wind and amazed the world.

# FAITH, THE BEST TROUBLE SHOOTER

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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Have you ever heard of an illiterate man who had great faith in himself? He was born into an unremarkable peasant family in an unknown village in western Siberia, Russia. The man had great faith in his ability to influence people from all walks of life. He had a lot of energy that was being channelled into wrong-doing. His name was Grigoriy Efimovich Rasputin. He grew up having an unpleasant life, quickly hardening into a vodka drinker and a hooligan at tender ages. He kept bad company and terrorised villagers. He was always being dragged to the authorities for wrong-doing. Despite that dark side to his life, he had a great desire to be noticed that is, he was a show-off. He did everything wholeheartedly, whether seducing a woman or what, he did it with enthusiasm mixed with a desire for show-off. Most women found him irresistible and fell prey to his advances.

Sometime later, when he was running away from his crimes, he met with something that never left him the same! He sought for refuge in a monastery. At the monastery, the influence of Russian monks left an indelible mark in him. He then turned his huge energies from crimes to religious mysticism and quickly became a monk and a prophet. Due to his his prior influence on people, many disciples, mostly women, sprung up around him. They were attracted to him

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by his magnetic eyes, his simple, moving preaching, his strange force of will and his endowment with gifts which many envied. News quickly spread all over like veld-fire that Rasputin was a great healer and clairvoyant. He performed miracles for people.

Despite his illiteracy, he had enormous desire for being accepted by the wealthy and famous and other high echelons of society. He took every opportunity to attract the attention of the rich, famous and influential. Church leaders and great families who had access to the emperor devoted their lives to him. His association with the upper class changed his life completely. He was no longer a pauper-man, though he continued wearing a dress as a symbol of being a man of the people. Despite his illiteracy, he conversed with high society very well. His company with the upper class eventually landed him in the home of Czar Nicholas II, the last of the Romanov, Russian emperors. His wife, Czarina, was too religious and chose Rasputin as her confidant. He was first called upon to heal Czarina's son who was suffering from haemophilia.

Rasputin had great faith in himself that he stated at one time that, *"The Czar thinks I am Christ incarnate. The Czar and Czarina bow down to me, kneel to me, kiss my hand."* He influenced the Czar to pursue autocratic, unbending policies, leaving those who loved the emperor wondering how an illiterate, scandalous charlatan could exercise such influence over the emperor. But, through gargantuan faith in himself, he controlled the mouth and the neck of the emperor. My friend, have faith in your abilities to turn around the worst of times into the

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best of your times. Control the neck and mouth of your worst of times. Put words into the mouth of your worst of times. Turn their neck for your own profiting. If the world could learn to do this, like Rasputin, the world would be alright. Have faith that you too, can do it. Have faith that can give you the power to catapult yourself from that dark situation and move on until the best of times welcome you into their clubs. Mercilessly raze through the worst of your times until they release their fetters from you and let you breeze into the best of times. Hear what the Bible says about faith:

*‘Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we can’t see. It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God. By our faith, we know that the world was made at God’s command. We also know that what can be seen was made out of what can’t be seen.’* Hebrews 11:1-3. Faith to solve challenges that arise during the worst of times is what is needed by the troubled world. If you believe that even when you are in the deep of things, you will solve the problems and see the light of dawn, you surely will. Failure and success exist in the mind and they are both states of the mind. But, if you believe that you can’t solve the problem at hand, then, surely you cannot and you will languish in the worst of times relentlessly. A great poet said it correctly when he said in this great, insightful poem:

*‘If you think you are beaten, you are,*

*If you think you dare not, you don’t*

*If you like to win, but you think you can’t,*

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*It is almost certain you won't.*

*“If you think you'll lose, you're lost*

*For out of the world we find,*

*Success begins with a fellow's will-*

*It's all in the state of the mind.*

*“If you think you are outclassed, you are,*

*You've got to think high to rise,*

*You've got to be sure of yourself before*

*You can ever win a prize.*

*“Life's battles don't always go*

*To the stronger or faster man,*

*But soon or late the man who wins*

*Is the man **WHO THINKS HE CAN!**”*

Golden opportunities abound in your hour of darkness, if you look at it with a positive eye. You can choose between focusing on the dark hours and never rise again or go through, go under, go over the



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dark moments and emerge a victor. It is all up to you, my brother but the crux of this book is to encourage you to move, eventually, to the best of your times after the worst of your times. You can only do this by putting on a helmet of faith. Faith is power. Faith is believing in the ability of God to deliver to you that which you requested for. As the poet put it, if you think you can't, that is your faith, your strong conviction that you can't and definitely, you will not get it since that is your strong belief. Faith, your conviction into the ability of the Lord to do that which you request for, can drive you to unimaginable heights. It can see you take on your Goliath when all the army commanders in your life are backing off. Faith can turn you into a heretic.

James J. Metcalfe knitted a wonderful poem for you as you go through calamity and seek for encouragement and hope to cross the floors to the days of happiness and reflect on your worst days, your best days, with laughter and a feel of victory. Victory, on reflection, is sweet. Extract the lessons from this provoking poem:

*I get discouraged now and then  
When there are clouds of gray,  
Until I think about the things  
That happened yesterday.  
I do not mean the day before  
Or those of months ago,  
But all the yesterdays in which  
I had the chance to grow*

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*I think of opportunities  
That I allowed to die,  
And those I took advantage of  
Before they passed me by,  
And I remember that the past  
Presented quite a plight,  
But somehow I endured it and  
The future seemed all right.  
And I remind myself that I  
Am capable and free,  
And my success and happiness  
Are really up to me.*

**James J. Metcalfe**

When many people meet with calamity, when hard times harp on them, they switch off their minds and face the calamity with despondence. The coming of calamity in your life is a great opportunity. In church, I usually teach the congregation that if you say you are a Christian and have never meet any challenges in your Christian journey, you probably haven't yet started on the Christian journey. Your coming out of the worst of times into victory or failure is all up to you! That is your choice. In every calamity there is an equal and opposite opportunity. Failure to recognise that there is an equal opportunity in every calamity is total failure. It is calamity on calamity. When you meet with mountains of problems, clothe yourself in the most expensive apparel for winning any battle, **FAITH**, and face the challenges with zeal and sooner or later, you

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will hit on your best of times. It is not always automatic that when you face the hard times, the next step is the good-times. No. Some people, right in the midst of calamity believe themselves doomed and they sink deeper into the dungeons of doom and never come out of the pit alive. They die and rot in the worst of times.

Coming out of the dungeon of calamity is a choice. If you clothe yourself in despondence then, you may never see the dawn of the best of times. It is only the gallant fighters, who clothe themselves in ruthless faith that can see the dawn of the best of times after going through the toughest of times. As the poet above said, it is all up to you to succeed and be happy or fail and live in gloom forever. What you believe in is what becomes of you, as has been alluded to by many great minds.

If you meet with calamity and think you will never come out of it, definitely you will die in it, but, if you think you can come out of it, that is faith on its own, then, you will come out of it with a testimony, a history to tell to others. Faith is the panacea for failure. Faith is the starting point for the accumulation of wealth. Faith has converted Mr Nobody into Mr Somebody. Faith took Misheck, Shadreck and Abednigo through the fiery furnace, and whom they believed and had faith in joined them during their darkest hour. They emerged victorious and shook the world as kings shivered before them and proclaimed glory to God the Almighty for shielding them against destruction.

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Until past age forty, Abraham Lincoln was a Mr Nobody from Nowhere until misfortune looked at him, greeted him and lodged in his life for a while, before he quickly showed it the door-way. His misfortune breezed onto him in the form of the death of his only ever truly beloved woman, Anne Rutledge. It left him reeling in the deepest of sorrows but that sorrow and loneliness aroused the sleeping genius in him, leaving him one of the greatest men for the US and the world at large. That giant in deep slumbers awoke and roared and gave big to the world. When the sleeping giant in him woke up, the world saw the qualities of a great leader, a great statesman and the world learnt top-seeded leadership from a man who historically persisted and endured it all until he landed at the White House, having demonstrated to the world how to endure until dawn that comes with the morning breeze knocks at the door, with a big reward.

Mahatma Gandhi clearly understood the principle of faith and levered it to his own advantage. He was poor, with no expensive suits. He did not have battle ships. He did not have a home. He did not have any weapons. But, through believing that he could, he gave India the breath of a revolution and ignited it. The world saw a simple man fight the monster emperor. The people of India co-operated with him in his passive non-cooperation and brought imperialism in India to its knees. A simple man, armed with nothing but faith, pulled down a monster and cut its head and placed it in a silver plate. My brother, clothe yourself with faith and achieve the unachievable. Clothe yourself with faith and ramshackle your worst of times and

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sniff the scent and beauty of the best of times. Faith is the impetus that can propel you into the skies where you can soar like an eagle, together with the eagles.

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# FORGIVENESS, IN THE WORST OF TIMES

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## CHAPTER SIX

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### **Forgive**

*“That slight misdeed of yesterday,  
why should it mar today?  
The thing he said, the thing you did,  
have long since passed away;  
For yesterday was but a trial;  
today you will succeed,  
And from mistakes of yesterday  
will come some noble deed.  
Forgive yourself for thoughtlessness,  
do not condemn the past;  
For it is gone with its mistakes;  
Their mem’ry cannot last;  
Forget the failures and misdeed,  
from such experience rise,  
Why should you let your head be bowed?  
Lift up your head and eyes!*

### **Selected**

You have gone through the worst of times and have harboured bitterness and resentment emanating from the harrowing

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experiences of the worst of times. You have blamed yourself and others around you for being there. You have even nailed God on the cross for your calamities. That is not necessary at all. It will sap all the energy in you for no benefit. These feelings will not take you over to the other side. Forgive yourself and those who assisted you, through painful means, to your highest place in society by sending you off-packing to your throne via the dungeon of the worst of times. As you set on your journey of forgiveness, the poem above, by a great, great selected poet, will assist you. The wisdom embedded in the poem is laced with rare rubies from far away lands. Caravans ran errands to go and cart them into our midst.

If hard times rock you down to the marrow and you feel like you are to blame for being in them, quickly forgive thyself and those who helped you end in the worst of times. But, know this, being in the midst of the worst of times, is not an end in itself, it is a step, a necessary one in the pursuit of success. The worst of times will impart you with great lessons for success. The secret to success is known by those who have failed before. Hanging on to grudges drains all the energy in you and gives power to the Devil to rock you down the more. Remember, everything happens for a reason and in its own season. Your getting into the worst of times is no mere coincidence. It is well-timed and will leave you a graduate from the University of Knocks. All those who have graduated from this university have gone to climb the rungs of their lives onto dizzy heights. The University of Knocks is the season of your failure, the season of your calamity. Gaining entrance into the University of



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Knocks is not a tragedy. The tragedy is failing to graduate from the prestigious university of experiences.

Know that those who pushed you into the worst of your times have catapulted you into higher positions in life. God enjoys uplifting people from the dust and, with hindsight, people also see how good the Lord has been to them. When God uplifts you from the dust, you have a wonderful testimony to tell the world. Bad times come upon us to instruct us, to awaken the giants in us and to make us witnesses unto the glory and power of the Lord.

One of the greatest stories ever told in human history about forgiveness is the story of biblical Joseph. His brothers betrayed him and sold him to foreigners who took him to Egypt for enslavement. As for young Joseph, there was every reason to keep holding on to begrudging his brothers for selling one of their own into slavery. Joseph knew one thing in life, that by forgiving his brothers, he was setting himself free of the fetters of hatred. Hatred imprisons he who hates and sets him free the moment he lets go. Hatred blocks blessings from coming to you. Several years down the line, when his brothers went to Egypt in search of food, food shortage emanating from a devastating hunger back home in Canaan, they bumped onto long-forgotten young Joseph. They never ever expected to see him again. They had no idea whatsoever that they would ever set their eyes on him. At first, his brothers did not recognise him when they saw him. Time had elapsed since they sold him to the enterprising Ishmaelite traders.

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When Joseph, now with all power and authority vested in him in Egypt, meets with his brothers again, he reveals to them who he is. But, already, he has made a decision to forgive them, forever. *“Yes, I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. Don’t worry or blame yourself for what you did. God is the one who sent me ahead of you to save lives.....After all you weren’t really the ones who sent me here-it was God. He made me the highest official in the king’s court and placed me over all Egypt.”* Genesis 45: 3-8. Joseph, having realised that God made him the head of the arrow by going through a furnace to hit the iron and mould it into what He wanted, etched a place for himself in the annals of history by extending an olive branch where all human reasoning said NO, revenge is sweet. He forgave his brothers and set them free of the blame yoke! By so doing, he also set himself free of holding onto hatred. Imagine the power in his hands now and how ruthlessly he could have dealt with his brothers who were now entirely at his mercy. He could do whatever he wanted to do over them in Egypt.

If Joseph had not forgiven his brothers, the coming of his brothers to Egypt was not going to make any impact in the lives of other people today. Joseph could also have skirted history like the billions of his own time who failed to forgive, as is normal and went down under, unrecognised. He had every reason to hold on to the hate for his brothers. But, he quickly interpreted that mishap as a God-directed mishap. *“.....After all you weren’t really the ones who sent me here-it was God.”* And that positive mentality landed him in the highest thrones. It is my wish that mankind could interpret all calamity as

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God sent and praise Him for all calamity. God will be happy if humans could achieve that.

Human reasoning can simply tell you that Joseph should have carried out gruel-some murder to his brothers to revenge on what they did to him. Instead, hear how he interprets what his brothers did to him, *“Don’t worry or blame yourself for what you did. God is the one who sent me ahead of you to save lives.....After all you weren’t really the ones who sent me here-it was God. He made me the highest official in the king’s court and placed me over all Egypt.”* He quickly realised that the worst of his times had given him the best of his times, as he walked about wearing the king’s royal ring, in fine kingly clothes, laced with a golden chain around his neck, and his brothers saw him in pontifical robes and bowed down. Little did they connect their evil doing to him to his success in the land of Egypt! His brothers had played a very big, necessitating cruel move, though, which eventually saw him ascend to the second most important seat in all Egypt, in the eyes of all Egyptians. That is God’s doing-taking you down under for uplifting you into the highest position. The same happened to Shadreck, Misheck, Abednigo and Daniel. They were charged with death sentences. But, the sting of death could not conquer the power of the Almighty and they shot up at once and made everlasting history. It is clear-cut that Misheck, Shadreck, Abednigo and Daniel too, thanked their adversaries for pushing them into the whims of history.

He realised that holding onto previous grudges was only destroying him. He let go of the past and let God take control of the situation.

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By so doing, he set himself first, free of hatred and, second, he let his brothers free of the hook of hatred. I reiterate, the worst of your times, are the best of your times. Always look around for the golden lining in them, you will tell me, and sure enough, the worst of times always carry those golden linings. There is a no cloud without a silver lining. Your writer too, went through many heart-rending seasons but, those heart-rending seasons gave you a writer. Otherwise, truly speaking, I wasn't going to take to writing. I had no idea I would ever write like this. Today, with hindsight, I look at my worst of times and thank God for them. As I smile to the brim and I say God thank you for that divorce, thank you Lord for that accident and thank you Lord for the short stint in jail. It was an eye opener to me. It was during those dreary hours in dungeon that I decided to serve you through the vomit of my pen. The treatment was a cruel treatment at that time in the past. But, here I am today, praising your name for the new lease of life in your arm. In your hand Lord, like you did to Ruth, I have found love and happiness in your house. I have found protection in your arm Lord. Today, I stand before the world testifying of your goodness.

Every negative seed has helped shape me into what I am today. I have used my sleeping, writing giant to bless someone somewhere, in this world. I have helped someone see positivity in negativity through my own situation. When you are in prison, you are just like a dead person except that you will still be having your breath. But, you are not free to do your will. You lose one of the most wasted resources in life, time. People never realise the importance of time

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up until it runs out. When you writhe under the fetters of prison and you have no time, you will know how important time is. When someone is lying on their death-bed, they realise the importance of time and start laying huge plans for what they should have done when they had time and energy in plenty.

I forgave all who pushed me to my worst of times as it later dawned in my mind that it was God's way of preparing me for a critical position in society. He wanted to help me create the correct environment for my miracle to happen. I have seen my own miracles manifest after going through the deep dungeons. It was God's way of awakening the giant in me. Failure to forgive others for whatever wrong they did to you can rob you of a great destiny as you expend your energies towards holding onto the grudges. Your destiny is far much greater than the grudges in your heart, weighing it down. Keeping a grudge in your heart requires a lot of energy. Always playing the worst scenario in the television of your mind can rob you of playing better videos in your life, of your life which can propel you to greater heights. If you want to be great, stand with the greatest. The greatest in the kingdom of God forgive others and in tandem with that, they are also forgiven their sins. God seeks to propel you to your greatest heights through the mountains of pain in your heart. Manipulate them for your own good, the good of mankind and for God's glory. The mountains of pain in your heart are a huge source of energy when properly manipulated.

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Again, another of the most striking stories on forgiveness is that of the lad David. King Saul was after his life. David had done all he could for King Saul, topping his sacrifices for the king by silencing the enemy by killing Goliath, who had become a threat to the Israelites, but the King wanted to spill his blood, in anyway. It had come into his ears that David had been anointed the next king after him and Saul sought to eliminate him before he ascended to the throne. Jonathan, the son of King Saul, privy to state secret decisions, is together with the king's army commanders, commanded to kill David. But Jonathan liked David so much because of what he had done for the king and the nation of Israel, that he told David his friend about the plot to end his life and even queried his father's decision to have David killed.

After reminding his father, King Saul about David's great works and sacrifices for the king he asks King Saul his father, *"Why do you want to kill David? He hasn't done anything to you. He has served in your army and has always done what's best for you. He even risked his life to kill Goliath. The Lord helped Israel win a great victory that day, and it made you happy."* 1 Samuel 19:1-5. After his discussion with Jonathan concerning David, King Saul swore never to kill David, but, it was just political gimmicking. Deep in his heart, he wanted him, eliminated sooner, and it was not long before he tried to pin David to the wall with his spear. David ducked it and escaped. The army was on high alert and under instruction to kill David. David did one great wise thing in his running away from King Saul. He went straight to Prophet Samuel and told him what had happened between him and King Saul.

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Prophet Samuel was the one who anointed David into a future king of Israel.

But, that did not stop King Saul from hunting David down for a kill. Saul and his army sought for David everywhere-in valleys and the hills of all the desert land. King Saul's goal was to spill the blood of David and preclude him from ascending to kingship. He probably wanted his own children to ascend to the throne. He did not want what the Lord had done to anoint David his successor. The King descended from his throne and stooped low in the valleys aiming to spill the blood of David until one day, leading an army of 3000 of Israel's best soldiers, still seeking for David, King Saul led his army near Wild Goat Rocks at Engedi. David and his followers were hiding at the back of the cave and King Saul, unaware, got inside the curve to relieve himself. It was David's greatest opportunity to exercise revenge on his foe by taking away the life of King Saul at once, right inside the curve.

David's men told him, *"The Lord told you he was going to let you defeat your enemies and do whatever you want with them. This must be the day the Lord was talking about."* 1 Samuel 24:4. See what David does to him who wants to end his life: He just sneaked over and cut off a small piece of Saul's robe. Saul did not notice what David did to him. After that, David's men blamed him for not taking revenge on King Saul and he replies and says, *"We are not going to attack Saul. He is my king, and I pray that the Lord will keep me from doing anything to harm his chosen king."* 1 Samuel 24:6 -7.

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Unaware, King Saul leaves the curve and takes to the road with his army and right there while the King and his army were proceeding with their journey, after the king had relieved himself, David got up and called out, *“Your Majesty, why do you listen to people who say that I’m trying to harm you? You can see for yourself that the Lord gave me the chance to catch you in the curve today. Some of my men wanted to kill you, but I would not let them do it. I told them, “I will not harm the Lord’s chosen king! Your Majesty, look at what I’m holding. You can see that it’s a piece of your robe. If I could cut off a piece of your robe, I could have killed you. But I let you live, and that should prove I’m not trying to harm you or to rebel. I haven’t done anything to you, and yet you keep trying to ambush and kill me…….”*

What great kindness was demonstrated by David in the midst of the worst of times that day! A spirit of forgiveness in the hour of darkness. If David had inclined his heart to the dictates of the worst of times and taken the matter to his hand, he could simply have killed King Saul. But, he chose God’s way. He let the will of the Lord prevail over his. By withholding himself from revenge and by letting go, in the face of death, David earned himself recognition and respect from defiant King Saul. Today, if you follow David’s way of forgiving even in the thick of things, your enemies will recognise you as a victor. *“David you are a better person than I am. You treated me with kindness, even though I have been cruel to you. You have told me how you were kind enough not to kill me when the Lord gave you the chance. If you really were my enemy, you wouldn’t have let me leave here alive. I pray that the Lord will give you a big reward for what you did today. I realise now that you will be the next king, and a powerful king at that. Promise me that you won’t wipe away*



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*my descendants. Let them live to keep my family name alive,*” said the stone-cold surprised King Saul. 1 Samuel 24: 17-21.

That was immeasurable forgiveness and kindness by David to his enemy. During his darkest hour, David showed kindness and a spirit of forgiveness to King Saul and the king acknowledged him as the next, powerful king on the throne. That was a great prophecy from King Saul! Surely, to this day, David is acknowledged as the greatest king ever to emerge from the Israeli sands. King Saul had never been shown such kindness in his life. As a king, he knew nothing but murder. It amazed him how someone could be that kind to him when all chances were pointing to him being wiped away instantly. It surprised him that his enemy spared his life. If you forgive your enemy, you are empowering yourself in the presence of your enemy, as David rightfully put it, *“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”* But, if you retain grudges, you give power to them that wronged you and God prepares a table in the presence of your enemies for those who have power, that is, those who forgive their wrong-doers. If your enemies are empowered that way, you will remain in the worst of times, and take ages, until you learn to forgive, to meet with your best of times.

Yes, forgiveness is also a process. It is not just automatic. Sometimes you may take a while to forgive them that wronged you but start now to plant a seed in your mind of setting yourself on a course of forgiving your wrong doers. You may forgive and never remember that wrong doing to you or you may forgive and keep on

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remembering, as long as you have removed the need for hitting back, the need for revenge, it's alright that way. By so doing, you resource yourself for greater things in life and God loves that. He feels happy when he sees his children forgiving each other. That, on its own, is expansion of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven accorded us forgiveness which we did not deserve.

And, forgiving has no limit. You can forgive the same person umpteenth times, as long as you live. David showed great forgiveness again, for the second time to King Saul in 1 Samuel 26: 8-25. Again, David was still being sought after by Saul for killing by King Saul and Saul and his troops fell asleep, with the troops all around him. As Saul and his troops were in deep slumber, David and A-bi-sha-i made their way to the troops of King Saul by night and they found King Saul fast asleep in the camp enclosure with his spear stuck into the ground next to his head. And A-bi-sha-i said to David, *“Today God has surrendered your enemy into your hand. And, now please, let me pin him to the ground with the spear just once, and I will not need to do it twice.”* As a child of God, know that your inner circles will always beg you to hit back. Your natural inclination will always tell you to hit back and chances for hitting back will present themselves several times to you. They will always tell you that you are a fool if you don't revenge. Follow what God wants not what man wants. You will see the best of times that way. If you take the matters into your hands and revenge, God will distance himself from you and you will probably never see the best of times. Let go and let God take control of the situation. That is the way to go. No other road leads to success apart

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from that road. God will quickly move away your worst times and give way to the best of your times.

However, David said to A-bi-sha-i: *“Do not harm him, for who can lift his hand against the anointed of Jehovah and remain innocent.....? So David took the spear and the water jug from next to Saul’s head, and they went away.... Then David crossed to the other side and stood on the top of the mountain some distance away, with a considerable space between them. David called out to the troops and to A’bner the son of Ner, saying, “A’bner will you not answer?” A’bner answered: “Who are you who calls to the king?” David said to A’bner: “Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? So why did you not keep watch over your lord the king? For one of the soldiers came in to do away with your lord the king. What you have done is not good. As surely as Jehovah lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the anointed of Jehovah. Now look around! Where are the king’s spear and the water jug that were next to his head.....?”*

*King Saul replied to David, “May you be blessed, my son David. You will surely do great things, and you will surely prevail”* Oh!! What a forgiving heart from David. In the two scenarios above, King Saul was a prisoner of hate. Hatred against young David who had been anointed future king of Israel had entangled him, imprisoning him with its strong fetters. David continuously forgave him despite his insidious heart towards him. By forgiving Saul, David was setting himself free. Jesus came to set us free, free of all vices including hatred with its proboscis of stinging. Despite the dark clouds hanging in your life, learn to forgive and let God take control of the situation.

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Hanging onto bitterness from things that happened in the past harbours negative thoughts in you. The past should be left to the past. It is dead. The past is a valley of lifeless bones. As Jesus said, the dead should be left to bury the dead. In other words, yesterday and its bitterness should be left to yesterday and from now on, focus on the present and the future. Yesterday is a very strong force which can pull you down into a pit and keep you locked in, never moving forward! Once it locks you into its carcoon, you need ruthless effort to get out of it. Again, the negative thoughts harboured in lack of forgiveness emit negative thoughts into the universe and those negative thoughts into the universe will bring in more and more of their type and enslave you in its fetters of rancour and bring in more and more of the negative feelings. Negative feelings will never take you anywhere. They can decelerate you into destruction, nothing else.

One way of positively dealing with the worst of times, is to be grateful to God about the worst of your times. When I was deep in my worst of times, I thanked God every moment for my mishap. It helped me dilute the pain as quickly as possible. In that great hour of darkness, God encouraged me to focus and expend all energies on my projects, shoving the pain and its sting into the past. Within a short space of time, I was smiling all over as if nothing had really happened. I learned like Abraham, not to have it my way but God's way. Abraham took his son Isaac to an altar of sacrifice to sacrifice to the Lord by obeying God's will. It gave me happiness in the midst of a great calamity that brought untold suffering to me. But, by continuously giving thanks to the Almighty, it was over in short space

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of time and I found myself swimming again in the sunshine, my days again laced with gold and happiness. When I let go of what I wanted to hold onto, I let God have his way and things took a different direction that eventually was the worst of times which became my best times for me with many wonderful lessons.

Legend has it that Albert Einstein, the great scientist who revolutionised the way we view time, space and gravity was very thankful. He said, “*Thank you*” hundreds of times each day. He was thankful to all scientists who lived before him for their effort and contributions to science which really became the basis upon which he built his theories of relativity. The words, “thank you,” are a powerful signal to the universe and they poke the universe to quickly release cavalades of resources to enable you to shake off the yoke of the worst of times and move to the best of times.

Right there in the annals of bad times, hold in your mind the image of what you really want to be when you move out of the bad times. You will, by so doing, not focus on the problem at hand but on what you really want. The images in your mind are what you really will get, eventually. If you keep on holding onto the images of bad times you will continue earning yourself the best of the worst of times. But, by holding images of the best of times, you will earn cavalades of the best of times in the physical manifestations. All the inventions were at first held as images in people’s minds. They held them in their minds until they manifested physically.

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If you have ever been into debt and have failed to pay that debt and interests accumulate daily against you, you will understand the weight of the burden of failing to clear a hanging debt. It is a heavy burden. If, by any chance your creditor cancels your debt, you will feel enlightenment embrace you. You feel a morning breeze embrace you. The joy is hilarious! That is what happens when we forgive others. We feel great joy in our lives and those we forgive feel the joy too. Forgiving each other is a prerequisite to God that He forgives us. It is the law of first. If you forgive others emotionally or financially, you too will be forgiven too financially and or emotionally. Forgiving someone gives you great power and freedom.

Despite the clouds of the worst of times hanging precariously over you, with all the calamities tossing you from left to right, the earth rotates for you to move out of the worst of times to the best of times and glorify God. Start glorifying him in your worst of times and glorify him in your best of times. That is your duty before the Creator, to glorify Him under all conditions; those that make us giggle with joy and those that tear our hearts with pain. Birds sing melodiously for you to cross to the best of times. Stars shimmer in the night for you to do your best for the Creator. The moon laughs across the heavens for you to do your best for the Creator. The sun glaringly gazes at you and the clouds clean its face here and there, just for you to do God proud. The wind hisses for you and brings the best melodies in your ears that you stand up now and do the best for mankind and the Creator despite the webs of challenges you are facing.

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The trees relentlessly encourage you by waving to you as you weave your plan of violently shaking the worst of times away from you. You cannot be fettered by mediocrity because of the worst of times. They are there to catapult you from obscurity into the limelight; from zero to hero, from dust to the greatest echelons in society. The worst of times tried to bury you not knowing that you were the seed that germinated and sprouted filling the whole earth with your product. Roar like a lion. Let's meet at the top echelons of society as we encourage others to come to where we are destined for. You and I are destined for greatness. God created us for greatness, nothing else. Let success be your noise.

Proudly meet you at the top, after your worst of times have pruned all the impurities in you!

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## **OTHER BOOKS BY MISHECK**

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- *Light out of Darkness*
- *Spiritual Apprenticeship for Wealth Creation*
- *The Worst of Times, The best of Times*
- *Sin, Prosperity, Sworn Eternal Enemies*
- *Ministry Leadership that glorifies the Creator God*
- *The greedy Pastor*
- *The fangs of love*
- *Memoirs of a writer*
- *Prophet S. Mamvura: The Making of a World Class Spiritual Doctor*
- *Vowing Vows*

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## FURTHER READING:

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1. *The Holy Bible*
2. *Reader's Digest, Great Events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*
3. *Dr. Myles Munroe, Maximising Your Potential, Destiny Image Publishers, Inc.*
4. *Bob Proctor, You Were Born Rich, LifeSuccess Productions, 1997*
5. *Henry S. Lucas, A Short History Of Civilization, McGraw-Hill, 1953*
6. *Milton Kammendo, It's Time To Unleash Your Greatness, Wonak Investments Private Limited, 2003*
7. *Antony Robbins, Unlimited Power, Pockets Books, 2001*