

Thinking In Possibilities Can Change You

Text 'With God all things are possible to them that believe.'

Let's admit right away that there are some problems that cannot be solved in this world. Death is one of them. It just is a reality. But let's note this. If there is another reality than this world and a compassionate God then death will be solved in that reality. Sure on earth we can learn to cope with the loss of a loved one and go on with living. But it's hard, painful. Time can be a great healer. A second marriage can sometimes transform our life and help make up for the void. And Friends! Friends can love us at incredible depths, if we are open to that. But it is still true that some problems have no solutions this side of the grave...

But those are not the kind of problems I want to talk about today. There are interestingly enough a lot of problems that we think are in this first category that really are not.

Some of you will be possibility thinkers and others of you will not. For instance linear thinkers who think in a straight line sort of way, may get stuck. If you are someone who has to do everything step by step and if you can't see your way forward you get blocked or stuck when an obstacle sits in your way.

Some problems are like doors; you can't go through the door without a handle. I used to have a large ginger Maine Coon cat. I would often watch him sit patiently at a door. If he knew how to operate the handle, the door would not be a challenge for him, but because he didn't know that, he would sit patiently, stymied. Are you just a bit like that?

There are some cats I know of who actually swing on the handle to open the door...

One of the best ways to deal with the door kind of problem I have found, is to believe in yourself! Because, if we lack self confidence, and believe that we can't solve problems we won't even bother to look for a handle for a problem. The very first thing then we need when confronting a problem is **to believe that it can be solved**. And we need self confidence to even get that far.

In my life I have found that the first step in building self confidence is to find someone who says: "I believe in you; you have got possibilities!"

All of us, if we think back over our lives have had people who, when the chips were down, were there for us in a big way. And if we listen to our inner voice, we can still hear their encouragement over the smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd, saying "You can do it! Good job! Well done! Atta girl! Atta boy!"

Or in the silence, there can be a soft hand that steals into ours and squeezes it, conveying love and support in our time of trouble- support for which there are no words...

I can remember a time in the Stratford area when the farmers were hit very hard economically. A farmer was running for political office.

He had to make his first speech before a city crowd. He was very nervous because he was much more comfortable among farmers than with the city crowd.

It was not long before he was heckled. He lost his place in his notes and stumbled, grew red in the face and was just about to sit down when suddenly from the back of the room came a great roar from a burly farmer!

"Tell them how we are hurting! Tell them how our livestock are dying. Tell them about the drought, the high cost of feed, tell them about the suicides. You can do it We believe in you!"

There was a stunned silence for a moment and suddenly, the would be politician 'saw red'. He threw away his notes and he told them alright! Night after night, riding by riding, he remembered those words " You can do it , we believe in you!" He swept to victory at the polls.

Have you ever experienced that? Have you ever done it for someone else? Have you ever affirmed someone in a crowd and watched the energy turn?

Here then is a primary law for success when you are discouraged; **listen for that voice in your personal history, that special person who believed in you! Then summon your courage and go for it!**

Once we have this cheerleader standing behind us, once we have shaken off the lack of self confidence, we can begin to tackle the challenge. Most problems that are tough to solve are a question of not thinking big enough, or clearly enough, or creatively enough and all it takes is one great idea, to get break through the log jam. One good idea can put that handle on your toughest problem and the door will open and you will walk through!

I once knew a man who was completely paralyzed below his shoulders, all except for the fingers in one hand. He was depressed, feeling trapped, at the whims of others and confined to bed in a nursing home.

One day a possibility thinker came into his ward and said: " I think that you could get around in a power wheel chair George." And George said, "I can't afford that!" And his friend said, "Well lets get some money!"

Two weeks later he was back with a brand new power wheelchair paid for by the folks at his church. Last time I saw George, he was whipping down the hall, off to see a friend on the next floor up!

When Robert Schuler was looking to start a church he had these possibilities:

- 1) Rent a school
- 2) Rent the Masonic Hall
- 3) Rent an Elk's lodge
- 4) Rent a funeral home chapel
- 5) Rent an empty warehouse
- 6) Rent a community club building
- 7) Rent a Seventh Day Adventist church
- 8) Rent a Jewish synagogue
- 9) Rent a drive in Theatre
- 10) Rent an empty piece of ground, a tent, and folding chairs

After trying all the easy ones with no success Schuller decided on #9 the drive in Theatre and the rest as they say is history.

Robert Schuller built the most amazing Crystal Cathedral edifice and a worldwide successful TV program.

Stratford took Schuller's 10th idea of a bare ground and a tent, to begin the Stratford Festival. The problem in Stratford economically was "what do we do about the loss of the railway shops?" Who would ever have thought that **Shakespeare** would be the answer to that question??

In the Gospel lesson this morning we came across the story of the call of Peter and Andrew. What did Jesus see in them? Somehow, he conveyed to these men two things: "I believe in you. You have got possibilities. Come and be my disciples!"

Why these men? They were rough and tough fishermen who were used to storms, success, failure and hardship. They had learned the value of persistence. They were in their own business. What did Christ see in these men?

We don't know, but we do know he saw possibilities, for later he was to say to Peter: "Thou art Peter. On this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." And 2000 years later the church is present all around the world with millions of followers.

Imagine for a moment that you are Peter and that you are about to found the Christian Church and all you are doing is fishing! Staggering isn't it how the church began? With fishermen??

But the disciples had to learn possibility thinking. After toiling all night for a catch, they were about to give up when Jesus the Possibility Thinker showed up and suggested that they fish on the other side of the boat. They were dubious but they risked and suddenly there was a great draught of fishes. The things that Jesus did changed his disciples' view of what was possible.

When you believe that "With God all things are possible.", when you hear the voice of Jesus within you say: "I believe in you. You have possibilities. Answer my call." The incredible potential of your life can open up before you in a very big way.

Deepak Chopra writes; "When you discover your essential nature and know who you really are, in that knowing is the ability to fulfill any dream you have, because you are the eternal possibility, the immeasurable potential of all that was, is and will be. Chopra thinks that underlying the infinite diversity of life is a unity: The unity of One All-Pervasive Spirit. St Paul describes this same spirit as the One who is in all, through all and through whom all things came to be.

This universe, this earth, this world is a manifestation of the life of that Spirit. The Creation is alive. It lives and breathes as you do!

It all began as an idea in the mind of God that manifested.

On our website we are posting photos of your experiences in nature. I am reminded of what Native American Chief Dan George once wrote:

The beauty of the trees'
The softness of the air
The fragrance of the grass
Speak to me

The summit of the mountain
The thunder of the sky
The rhythm of the sea
Speak to me

The faintness of the stars
The freshness of the morning
The dewdrop on the flower
Speak to me

The strength of fire
The taste of salmon
The trail of the sun
And the Life that never goes away
They speak to me

And my heart soars!

Witnessing the same phenomenal world, Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

The Bible says that we are co-creators with God of this living world. We are made in The Image of God. We are privileged to create life in the womb. Because we partake in the same Life Spirit as God, we can begin an idea and seek to manifest it, because we are players here, just as God is!

When and if we decide out of gratitude to turn our lives over to God's direction, we open ourselves to the field of all possibilities and all things become possible for us. Handles spring onto shut doors and we can pass through!

It is an exciting thing to do, to give yourself back in gratitude and trust to the God who made you. It is to fall in love with the Creator of all living things. For even the inanimate is alive with God's LIFE. Jesus said the rocks would cry out if his disciples were to be quiet when he was entering his destiny in Jerusalem.

We can be plumbing, designing, teaching, farming, building, doing dentistry, painting a picture, working in Human resources, a pastor, a doctor or nurse, an Olympic athlete an astronaut, programming computers, working for the government or ourselves...whatever. We can even be out fishing on a Northern lake when God's Spirit may come to us and say deep within 'I believe in you. You have possibilities! Follow me!" And if we answer the call then the slow miracle of our lives begins to unfurl.

Church can be a place for possibility thinkers to feel at home- people who want to start again, to leave their old lives of failure behind them like broken fishing nets on the shore.

A single mother called Emily who had to work at minimum wage struggled with her self-esteem. Her marriage had failed. She was

divorced. She had built defenses around herself so that people would not get too close. She continued to wear her wedding ring as a way to protect herself. "After all who ever would want to marry me?" she thought.

Her job was a long drive away. There were no buses out there and she couldn't afford taxis. So, with her few savings following her divorce, she bought an old car. That meant she could keep her job. She barely made enough to scrape by however.

But one day on her way home close to her neighborhood garage her car broke down. They looked at it and gave her a price of \$850.00 to get it fixed. She had to leave it at the garage. She walked home and cried all the way.

Life was just too hard she thought. The next day she got a ride to work from a coworker who lived near the plant but who came all the way in to pick her up. She had told her what had happened.

Emily authorized the repair, not knowing how ever she was going to pay for it. The next day after work she went to pick up the car. She took her last \$50.00 out of the bank intending to use it as a starter payment for the repair, hoping they would release the car to her.

She went into the garage and the boss said to her "I've got something to show you." He went over to a drawer and pulled it open. Inside was all kinds of money in small bills. He said "It began this morning. People kept coming in from where you work and dropped off money. My mechanics heard about it and only charged 25% of their hourly rate. It is all fixed and you only owe me \$15.00.

Emily suddenly realized just what had happened. **Her fellow workers believed in her. They felt she had possibilities...**

When she got home, she stood in front of the mirror for a long time and then slowly took her wedding ring off and put it away in a drawer...

Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when he saw two brothers casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them; "Come with me and I will make you fishers of men." And at once they left their nets and followed him. Suddenly in these men's lives were new possibilities.

Today we at Knox are the result of that conversation.

What is God saying to you in your heart about possibilities? **And what will be the result of that conversation??**

Amen.