

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE'S

What to do When...

HOW TO HANDLE LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

Guideposts
Outreach
PUBLICATIONS

Guideposts Outreach

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Introduction

This booklet will help you when you need help the most.

Life is filled with difficulties and challenges. When these come your way, it helps to have some clearly defined plan of action. Here you will find fourteen common problems and practical suggestions of *WHAT TO DO WHEN* these situations arise.

Under each “trouble” heading in the booklet are listed carefully selected scripture passages, along with comments on what the verses mean and how to apply them to your life. The suggested method for using this booklet is first to read it from beginning to end. Then, study each section as your troubles and needs arise. You will find that meditating on and memorizing the scriptures will give you strength in your times of need. As you allow the verses to sink into your mind, the sacred words will actually change your reactions so that you can conquer whatever comes your way.

By dwelling on these Bible verses and living by them, you prepare yourself for whatever comes when it comes. You *will* know *WHAT TO DO WHEN*.



REV. DR. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

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What to do when...

ANGRY

It matters a *great* deal what you do when you become angry. You can stir up trouble, make enemies, ruin chances or make yourself sick. But by properly handling your anger, you can keep situations under control, cement friendships, win respect and stay healthy.

Good sense makes a man slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offence.

—PROVERBS 19:11

When anger washes over you, just say to yourself, “It is stupid to get mad. It won’t get me anywhere except into trouble. The momentary satisfaction of letting go isn’t worth the difficulties I will experience as a result.” Take a minute and talk yourself into being sensible. This procedure will slow down your anger reactions and help you rise above insults or aggravations.

Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

—JAMES 1:19

The longer you can keep quiet, the more effective your reactions will be. Don’t say the sharp words, don’t make the quick retort, don’t write that nasty

letter (or if you do, tear it up). Say nothing. Keep quiet. Make no reply. Practice the great strategy of delay.

Do not let the sun go down on your anger.

—EPHESIANS 4:26

Empty anger out every night to keep it from accumulating. In your prayers, drain off any anger that may be lingering in your mind. Forgive everybody; tomorrow is another day.

What to do when...

ANXIOUS

For many people, worry is a constant and troubling problem. These Bible references will help you defeat your own worries.

*We can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper,
I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?'*

—HEBREWS 13:6

You do not stand alone in this world; you can turn to God, and He *will* help you. Fill your mind with thoughts of God; get in harmony with God's will; exercise simple trust. Instead of thinking how difficult your problem is, think how great and powerful God is. When you do this, it releases spiritual power into your mind that will enable you to meet your situation—whatever it is. Repeat this text whenever you are afraid.

*Have no anxiety about anything, but in
everything by prayer and supplication with
thanksgiving, let your requests be made known
to God.*

—PHILIPPIANS 4:6

When you are worried, ask God to take away your fears or show you how to handle the problem that

causes the fear. Then, immediately upon asking Him, give thanks. Express your belief that He is answering your prayer.

If you sit down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

—PROVERBS 3:24

When you lie down to sleep, think of God as being with you and watching over you. Place the cares of the day in His hands. Every night say this verse over to yourself before you go to sleep. Then, instead of fears in your subconscious, faith in God's presence will help you develop a confident approach to life.

What to do when...

CRITICIZED

There is just one way to avoid criticism—never do anything. Get your head above the crowd, and jealous people will notice and attack you. So, welcome criticism as a sign that your life has purpose. Actually, your critic is an asset (though at times an annoying one!) because he keeps you alert and causes you to examine yourself and your motives.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

—ROMANS 12:14

When anybody criticizes you, instead of fighting back or saying unkind things about him, simply bless him. This means asking God to help him. Pray that his life will be filled with blessings. By following this procedure, your critic—instead of receiving opposition from you, which is destructive—will receive goodwill, which is creative. You may not win him over by blessing him, but you will remove the hurt from yourself and possibly help him overcome his hatefulness.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

—ROMANS 12:17

There is always a tendency, when criticized, to criticize in return. Something evil has been done to you, and human nature wants to give evil in return. But that only makes the whole situation more evil! And it is a simple fact that no good ever comes out of evil.

When you act small and vengeful, it's bound to come back at you and make you look bad. But when you do the noble thing—the big, generous and right thing—everybody will see that you are a “big person” and therefore the criticism is undeserved.

Never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’

—ROMANS 12:19

It is not your business to get revenge—only God has that right. He is the one who repays people for the wrongs they have done. He alone is the judge of men's actions. So, leave it to Him. He can do it better than you can, and He does it *constructively*.

What to do when...

DISAPPOINTED

Disappointment can cause you to be so emotionally disturbed that you will be unable to think effectively. As a result, you cut off the creative forces that are ready to help you. Disappointment can strike you at almost any time, so it's important that you learn to deal with it.

Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

—HEBREWS 10:35

When disappointment strikes, hold tightly to your faith. Say, “I am still confident. I still believe.” It will require mental and spiritual effort to maintain this confidence in God and in yourself, but it is your road to better things.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

—PSALM 103:2

Start thanking the Lord for all the benefits He has given you. Do this instead of mentally—and perhaps vocally—harping on what has been denied you. You'll be amazed how much better your life will look when you saturate it with thanksgiving!

Be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you.'

—HEBREWS 13:5

The word “contentment” derives from two Latin words, *con* and *tenere*, meaning “to hold together.” When you have faith in God, your mind will “hold together” so efficiently that you can recover from disappointment. If you always remember that God is on your side, you can be content with whatever comes your way. And out of such contentment great things can happen.

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

—ROMANS 8:28

When you are disappointed, examine yourself to make certain you are thinking and living in harmony with God’s purpose. It could be that you have wandered off the Godly path. Instead of dwelling upon the word “disappointment,” think of it as “His-appointment.” What you regard as a disappointment may actually be a wonderful new plan for your life—namely, *His* plan.

What to do when...

DISCOURAGED

All human beings experience happy and depressed moods; it’s part of the rhythm of life. The problem isn’t whether or not discouragement will come, for it *will* come. The question is: Do you have the spirit and skill to meet it efficiently?

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

—PSALM 27:14

When you “wait for the Lord” you condition your mind to think about God rather than your difficulties. When you dwell on your troubles, they grow large and become dominating. But, as you concentrate your thoughts upon God, your difficulties will shrink to actual size. This healthy and rational thinking then enables you to handle your troubles successfully.

The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him.

—NAHUM 1:7

Here is something great to think about when discouragement clouds your mind: *The Lord is good.* Everything cannot have gone bad, for the Lord is

good. Think of God as a stronghold, a castle from which spiritual reinforcements rush to help you, giving you new power to confront your difficulties. God knows your troubles and will stand by you.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.
—PSALM 42:11

The cure for discouragement is hope, but it is more than vague hope. It is hope in God. Practice the belief that God will drive off discouragement. Picture the bright star of hope in God shining in your mind and pushing back the dark night of discouragement.

What to do when...

FRUSTRATED

“Why do things go so wrong for me? Why do so many difficulties get in my way? Why does my life seem to go from bad to worse?” These are the complaints that lie at the bottom of that state of irritation and exasperation that we call frustration. For the healing of this condition, the following passages are helpful.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

—PSALM 34:19

Even those who are attempting to live right are subject to “afflictions.” But we are promised that the Lord will deliver us out of all such trouble. Our part is simply to put our frustration into God’s hands. Then, having left it with Him, we must go ahead and do our best, knowing that He will make things right.

Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you.

—JOB 22:21

Frustrations may arise from the fact that we are not “agreeing” with God, that we are trying to insist upon our own way and not going at things correctly. Of course, you can’t assume you are right only when

there is no resistance. But when everything seemingly gets in the way and continues to do so, when doors are persistently shut, it may indicate that we ought to rethink our objectives and goals. *Are we working at the right thing or going at it the right way?*

*Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him,
and he will act.* —PSALM 37:5

Prayerfully decide what you want to accomplish. Then, put the matter in the hands of God, asking for guidance and help. Believe He is with you. You can expect results if you commit your way to the Lord, trust Him, work hard and do your part. You can have confidence that God will act and things will come out right, no matter how many difficulties may have frustrated you.

What to do when...

ILL

A direct relationship exists between emotional attitudes and health. Many people are ill as a result of wrong thinking. Religion—a true belief in and commitment to Go—can be a powerful healer.

And he [Jesus] went about all Galilee, healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.
—MATTHEW 4:23

Doctors are able to heal effectively not only due to their skill and knowledge, but also because the patient has faith in them. In your illness, practice faith in Christ as a Healer. Form a definite mental image of the Master visiting you and laying His hand of healing upon you. Hold in mind the picture that the text presents of Jesus going about healing people. Conceive of yourself as among those who experience the healing Grace of Christ. Use this affirmation: “The healing grace of Jesus Christ is working in me now.”

*Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God,
believe also in me.* —JOHN 14:1

When you keep your heart from being troubled with anxiety or any other disturbing factor, your

physical being will more completely respond to the healing care of your physician. Proclaim in you heart and mind that, “He who created my body is now helping it to function normally.” As you repeat this verse, visualize your body, mind and soul as entering into a state of harmonious health.

The prayer of faith will save the sick man.

—JAMES 5:15

During your illness, prayer will attune your mind to God and permit His healing forces to operate in you. These forces are quietness of mind, creative hope, the joyful experience of the presence of Christ and the conviction that God’s restorative energy is within you. You will discover that the prayer of faith is one of the most powerful influences in getting your spirit into that state where God and the doctor can more effectively make you well.

What to do when...

NERVOUS

People everywhere are tense and on edge. The high tempo of modern life has taken its toll on those unable to adjust to multi-tasking and over-pressurized demands. The following passages teach how to put a quieting hand upon our nervousness.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:7

Say this verse slowly, letting its melody and meaning fall softly into your thoughts. Take plenty of time to contemplate the vast peace of God, which is so deep and full and kind that we cannot comprehend it. Yet this peace floods into one’s life with such health-giving force that nervousness passes, leaving us calm and in control of ourselves.

I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

—JOSHUA 1:5

Nervousness is caused many times by insecurity, by self-doubt, by the frightening feeling that you must fight life’s battles alone. What peace and courage this great verse offers you! It reassures you that God will

stand by to help and support and protect throughout your entire life.

Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him.
—PSALM 37:7

Form a picture in your mind of the greatness, the kindness, the peace of God. Let yourself grow quiet as you reflect upon God's enormous goodness. Your strained nerves will then relax because your mind, which controls your nerves, is filled with God's supreme quietness and love.

What to do when...

REJECTED

Many people suffer from isolation, from not being one of the group, from not really belonging. How can you truly be in fellowship with others, be accepted by them and become competent in the ability to get along successfully with people? These verses offer some of the key principles.

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

—COLOSSIANS 3:14

The secret to getting along with other people is *love*. When you have an attitude of genuine goodwill, it has the effect of binding people to you and creating a state of harmony between them and yourself. When, even unconsciously, you send out an indifferent or cold attitude, it tends to separate you from the group, for instinctively people feel whether you like them or not. So, the first step in getting along with people is to practice genuine love until it becomes second nature.

Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth.

—1 SAMUEL 2:3

The key word expressed here is *humility*. The

psychological fact is that the shrinking person often tends to compensate for his inferiority feelings by arrogant actions and a proud manner. So, although he really isn't that type of person at heart, he appears to others to be so. The result is that people do not like him. So take care that you do not speak or act arrogantly; instead, cultivate the spiritual virtue of humbleness.

*Love one another with brotherly affection:
outdo one another in showing honor.*

—ROMANS 12:10

This passage urges you to like people so genuinely that you can control your “me first” tendencies and sincerely desire to put others ahead of yourself. Observe those who get along best with people, and you will invariably see that they are always putting the other person first.

What to do when...

RESENTFUL

The person who lives above resentment will have joy, peace and a wonderful state of well-being. Also, he will have fewer enemies than those who practice retaliation. Here are three verses to help you.

*The north wind brings forth rain; and a
backbiting tongue, angry looks.*

—PROVERBS 25:23

Even as the north wind drives dark rain clouds before it, so does a mean tongue stir up storms. Black clouds appear on people's faces and mean feelings are generated in their hearts. How different when one does not backbite, but rather, with self-control, maintains his composure. Then there are no storms, only peacefulness.

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and
clamor and slander be put away from you,
with all malice, and be kind to one another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in
Christ forgave you.*

—EPHESIANS 4:31-32

A Christian is a person who is kind, tenderhearted and forgiving. If you allow yourself to be guilty of bit-

terness, anger, clamor (gossipy talking) and slander (lies), you will suffer from the sickness of resentment, which eats away your health and happiness. Say this text to yourself often, so that it will control your reactions when things don't go your way.

If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.

—ROMANS 12:20

Instead of allowing yourself to hold resentment, use this spiritual strategy: *Do something for your enemy.* Speak well of him; be just as nice to him as he has been mean to you. If you fight him back and give him just what he sends, the hostility will deepen. But if you give him good for evil, you will confuse him so that in due time you may actually win him over. The greatest thing to with an enemy is to make him your friend.

What to do when...

SORROWFUL

Sorrow is a part of human experience; it is one of the inevitable facts with which we all must deal. There is no bright or easy philosophy that will shield a person from the necessity of meeting sorrow's cold, hard weight at some time in his life. So we must be prepared to meet it when it comes.

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

—PSALM 30:5

In times of grief and sorrow, remember this: Your agony is not permanent. What seems to be the cold, stern face of God is only momentary, while His kindness and His love are for all your life. Though you may be brokenhearted and a dark night seems to settle down upon you, it will pass. Morning will come and with it understanding and—ultimately—joy. So you can carry on through the darkness of sorrow, for He *will* bring you to a new day.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for

the former things have passed away.

—REVELATIONS 21:4

When we were young, our parents took us in their arms and wiped away our tears. In that same way, God, the great parent of humanity, comforts us. As we live with Him we will enter into an understanding and depth of life where pain, mourning and crying shall pass away in His Heavenly Kingdom. The ultimate end of human experience is not sadness, but eternal goodness.

As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him.

—PSALM 103:13

God has pity in His heart for His children. His kindness and sympathy are always ours; in our sorrow He weeps with us. We read in John 11:35, “Jesus wept.” Thus Divinity shares human grief.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.

—PSALM 34:18

When you feel utterly crushed by the tragedy and sorrow of life, say this beautiful verse aloud and feel His kindly presence renewing your depressed spirit. God is near; be at peace.

What to do when...

TEMPTED

Peter Marshall, former Chaplain for the United States Senate, said, “It’s no sin to be tempted. It isn’t the fact of having temptations that should cause us shame, but what we do with them. Temptation is an opportunity to conquer. When we eventually reach the goal to which we are all striving, God will look us over, not for diplomas, but for scars.”

Temptation, in one form or another, attacks each of us. But fortunately, we have spiritual weapons for gaining victory over it.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

—1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

No temptation will ever come your way that has not been faced by others. And if others can overcome it, so can you. Moreover, God will not allow any temptation to attack you that you are not able to overcome. God understands the problem of temptation and has given you a way out. These facts—that God is faithful, that

He will not allow you to be tempted more than you are able to stand and that, along with the temptation, He provides a way out of it—encourage you to know you *can* conquer your temptation.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

—ISAIAH 55:7

Temptation is in your thoughts. Therefore, to overcome temptation, simply think *right*—think right until your thoughts are good thoughts and not bad ones. Then you will have the power to stop wrongdoing and return in purpose and dedication to God. When you do this, you receive forgiveness and pardon.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

—LUKE 4:18

People who are victims of recurring temptation through their weakness are indeed “captives.” The worst prisons are not made of iron bars and stone, but of thoughts. We imprison ourselves by our sins. But when we repent and surrender ourselves to Christ and want freedom from our sins, He sets us free.

What to do when...

TIRED

The burdens and responsibilities of life sometimes rest heavily upon us and our strength seems insufficient. Too many demands make us weary and tired—and it’s not good to be tired, unless fatigue is balanced by a normal renewal of strength.

I will strengthen the weak. —EZEKIEL 34:16

Did you ever stop to consider where you get your energy? It comes from God. When that energy runs down and you feel weak and tired, you can go back to Him, and He who created your energy can recreate it. Remember those other words from John 1:4: “in him was life.” He will give life to you if you ask Him and live according to His will. You *can* overcome weakness, and abnormal tiredness will no longer be a problem.

Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

—HEBREWS 12:1

One way to overcome tiredness is to lay aside the

heavy weights that sap your strength —weights such as fear, hate, anger, impatience and all types of sin. In fact, sin is the heaviest of all weights, and it must be laid aside if we are to run the race of life and win. Move forward with determination, keeping Jesus in mind. He will sustain you always.

My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.
—EXODUS 33:14

How can you find rest and renewal in the midst of your hectic life? Simply become very aware of God's presence, realizing that He will help you with your responsibilities. He will show you how to work with conservation of energy, how to work in a relaxed manner and feel rested, rather than tired. To get into this mood and manner of living, frequently say this verse and meditate upon it.

What to do when...

UNHAPPY

An amazing number of people are vaguely unhappy. But this shouldn't be! You should awaken every morning with a thrill in the your heart, looking forward to the day. These three verses will help you cast off unhappiness and show you how to live joyfully.

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
—PSALM 118:24

Every morning, as soon as you awake, say these dynamic words aloud. God has given you a new day crammed with opportunity to build a better life, to learn something new, to spend time with those you love, to do something worthwhile for the world. As you begin your daily business, repeat this verse. And, if you begin to run down in spirit during the day, say it again. No method is more effective in driving off unhappiness than to saturate your mind and soul with this great passage.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.
—PHILIPPIANS 4:4

We make ourselves unhappy by habitually thinking unhappy thoughts. The simple cure: Start think-

[illegible]

—PSALM 89:15-16 (NIV)

Real, dedicated Christians are happy people. That does not mean that they are unaware of the pain and suffering all around them. Indeed, they are not true Christians unless they are deeply concerned and are doing something about it. But Christians are filled with rejoicing because they have entered into a personal relationship with Christ—and that relationship gives them victory over all misery. To be happy, be truly Christian in experience, faith and service.

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