

Coach's Corner

by Sharon Pahlka, kidney patient and life coach



You got a problem? Ouch!

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Life is difficult...it seems to be one problem after another. We continually face a choice: run from our problems or face them. Ultimately, it is in confronting and resolving our problems that life gains meaning.

Problems call forth courage and wisdom; they cause us to grow spiritually and mentally. We learn from our problems. As Benjamin Franklin said, "Those things that hurt, instruct." Ouch!

Fearing pain, we avoid facing problems in all kinds of ways: procrastination, denial, deadening ourselves with drugs. The problem with avoiding suffering is that the substitute becomes even more painful. And, when we avoid the growth the problem demands of us. What may seem today like the end of your life or world can become the most significant, positive point of your life.

But I DISLIKE pain! The perseverance and courage of others inspires me. A mother, after the death of her physically and mentally challenged daughter, writes, "We are mainly who we are today (good and bad) because of the experiences she brought in our lives." A friend, after years of dialysis and three transplants, says that through adversity she found her courage and discovered her life purpose. "Adversity introduced me to who I am and what I'm supposed to do..." Adversity introduces us to ourselves and brings meaning to our lives.

Coaching Question: Have there been times when adversity has served you?

Coaching Tip: Don't allow yourself to be defined by your hardships; instead, face them.

Homework: List three problems you have today and the avoidance pattern you often use. Envision what it would look like to face and go through each problem, or even to endure rather than run from it.

Quote: "Adversity causes some men to break—others to break records."
William Arthur Ward

Resource: *Man's Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl

Sharon Pahlka is a life coach specializing in helping those with chronic health challenges live well and meaningfully. She spent 19 years on dialysis, and for the last 12 years has had a kidney transplant. To learn more and read other Coach's Corner articles, visit her Web site: <http://www.lifeisagift.com>.