



Introduction

Bởi:

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The title of Harold Kushner's classic book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* conveys an eternal truth – it's not *if* bad things happen to good people, it's *when*. At one time or another, we all have our worlds turn upside down on us. We are overwhelmed by health problems, money troubles, relationship challenges, career crashes, and dark nights of the soul. When (not if) these things happen to you, how you choose to respond will, more than any other single factor, define your character and set a path for your future.

When bad things happen to good people, they often happen unexpectedly: the cancer diagnosis, pink slip, court subpoena, divorce papers; the fall down the stairs, the fall in the stock market, the fall in sales as a new competitor enters your market; the call every parent dreads: “there's been an accident.” The world suddenly turns upside down and you must respond – even hiding out in paralyzed fear and doing nothing is a response of sorts.

The purpose of this book is to help you avoid reacting in ways that are counterproductive and self-sabotaging, and instead respond with courage, determination, and faith – to respond in such a way that you grow as a person and create new opportunities out of apparent adversity. *There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so*, said Hamlet in Shakespeare's play. When bad things happen, it's tough to see how anything good can come from it. It takes a conscious act of will to find the silver lining, the blessing in disguise that will help you find, or create, meaning from adversity.

Eric LeGrand was on his way to a professional football career when he was paralyzed making a tackle in a college game. The way he chose to think about what had happened to him set him on a path where, through his writing and speaking, he is helping many others better handle the challenges in their lives. Marcus Blank was fired from his dream job as CEO of Handy Dan's. The way he chose to think about what happened set him on a path to launch Home Depot, one of the great American business success stories. Candace Lightner's daughter was killed by a drunk driver. The way she chose to think about what had happened set her on a path to found Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), an organization that by some estimates is responsible for saving the lives of more than 300,000 people who otherwise would have been killed by drunk drivers.

This book will not prevent bad things from happening to you, nor can it stop your world from turning upside down. My goal, with the help of the “coauthors” whose books are quoted within, is to help you be prepared to respond in ways that are positive, nurturing, and constructive. When bad things happen, they do not un-happen; no amount of crying, complaining, self-pity, being a victim, or blaming others will return you to the *status quo ante*, the way things were before. But by the way we choose to think about and respond to what has happened, we can change everything. We might or might not someday be able to say it was the best thing that could have happened (almost everyone who has ever lost a job will eventually say that, but no parent who has ever lost a child will), but we *will* be able to say that we did what we could to make something good come from it. And though it might not be immediately obvious, the way in which we handle the adversity might confirm the audacious claim of Friedrich Nietzsche that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

How this book is organized

Staying on Top When Your World's Upside Down is a completely different book than the original 1996 edition. Instead of 1001 bite-sized bits of advice, this version features 101 short chapters. Each chapter is introduced by a brief excerpt from a book written by one of the 101 people I think of as my co-authors because they each have something important to say about coping with, and emerging stronger from, hard times. I hope you will be inspired to read some of these books as well – think of it as homework.

Your world *will* turn upside down. Following the advice in this book will help you make sure that when it does, you come out on top.