



# Illuminate the darkness

Bởi:

Joe Tye

*“A distinguishing characteristic of the creative mind is that it can accept reversals of fortune without emotional damage – indeed, processes them at once into something rich and strange.”*

Edmund Morris: *Beethoven: The Universal Composer*

By the time he wrote his fifth symphony (you know, the one with the “victory” theme), Beethoven was already losing his hearing. By the time he wrote his ninth symphony (you know, “Ode to Joy”) he was stone deaf. What could be worse for a musician than to be stone deaf? Any yet, in that aural darkness, Beethoven saw shapes that became some of the greatest music ever written.

What could be worse for a football player than to be paralyzed? Rutgers’ defensive lineman Eric LeGrand was on track to become a professional football player when a smashing tackle left him a quadriplegic. In his book *Believe*, he wrote about how he had been inspired by the story of another quadriplegic who believed, as Eric believes, that he would again walk one day: Christopher Reeve. And now Eric has become that voice of inspiration for many others. In his book, he recounts the story of how, during a speaking event for middle-schoolers, he was asked by a blind child what advice he had for him. His response reflects the soul of a man who has found life in the darkness (the way Beethoven did) and is now sharing that light with others. He said:

You have to believe in yourself. You can’t let anything stop you from being the best you can be, from being yourself. You have a lot going for you. You can talk, and you can think, so let me leave you with that encouragement.

In his book *Illuminate: Harnessing the Positive Power of Negative Thinking* my good friend David Corbin wrote: “I think you’ll find that you will never be able to eliminate the negative until you have the gumption to illuminate it first.”

By the way, David is the person I referred to earlier who called me on the carpet for just whining about my catastrophic Lasik experience rather than doing something constructive to help prevent other people from suffering similar experiences.