

Get a Life -- AGAIN!

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It's true. Bad things happen to good people. Nothing new about that. However, we can make matters worse by continually focusing on it. Life isn't so much what happens to us as what we DO about what happens to us.

So what do we do? What action do we take? Grief can be lightened or intensified. Sorrow can be an escape from life or a normal part of adjustment. Anger can be debilitating or harnessed to power great causes. Uncertainty can leave us paralyzed, forever on edge. Or it can prompt us to take new paths, to discover what would have been missed, to make connections we would have overlooked. We choose whether we wake up with the proverbial "Good morning, God!" or "Good God. Morning!"

We decide, consciously or not, thoughtfully or not, to make a good day--or complain about a bad day. Those who make the most of whatever life hands them use the Green Light® style. They make the best of every situation. They can also guide others who want a better way. Their Green Light thoughts lead to Green Light words and then to Green Light ACTS. Like a magnet, they draw out and bring together the best of everyone.

Red Light

Inaction
Negative
Unproductive
Short-term view
Survival mode
Victim

Green Light

ACTION!
Positive
Productive
Long-term view
Success mode
Victor

On the short term, it's often easier to give up, to think red, speak red, act red. On the long term, it's a life sentence of hard labor--short on laughs and long on gripes, short on relationships and long on loneliness. We get our teeth drilled not because it's fun but because it's wise. It's tough. We do it anyway.

Red Light

FOCUS:

Obstacles
Past
Worst Case Scenario
Can we...? NO!
Will it work?
Status Quo

Green Light®

FOCUS:

Objectives
Future
Best Case Scenario
How can we...?
How might it work?
Status? GO!

Do we want to be in charge of our life or host our own pity party? Many will join the Poor Me Parade--but no one will march to Sousa. No one will wear a grin, let alone a big red clown nose. Crowds won't line the streets to see who floats by.

Red Lighters, like Chicken Little, continually sound the alarm, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" Green Lighters concoct sky hooks and hold things up. They determine, as best they can, what the reality of the situation is. Then they take the ACTION they believe produces the best outcomes. They also put on a happy face--or at least a stiff upper lip--and carry on.

With incomplete information, with no crystal ball projecting a view into the future, they make the best decisions they can at the time. As new data, new circumstances, new options appear, they readjust and again take the best ACTION they can at the time. Action uplifts and encourages. Inaction fosters a feeling of being helpless, discouraged and adrift.

Green Light action draws us into a positive upward spiral.

Red Light action pulls us into a negative downward spiral.

Many of us now make much better health advocates for ourselves, no longer expecting the medical profession to do it all for us. We must also be our own life advocate, our own decision-maker, designer of our future. It never was a good idea to trust it to some person or program. Inventive, creative, designing and directing our destiny--that's the Green Light style. We can always give up. We can't always change our mind, say, "Oops. I want my life back," and thus undo the damage.

What information do I need?

What shall I ignore? Forget?

What perceptions need to change?

What are the odds I'll face a major disaster?

What can I control? Influence?

What is my focus?

Green Lighters ask the questions that:

1. Prompt the thinking.
2. Force the discoveries.
3. Propel the ACTION.

Auto accidents kill fifty thousand people a year, yet people don't abandon their cars. Remaining in the driver's seat means more control of the destination. Turning the wheel over to fear leads to dead ends. Fear will never take us where we want to go.

So DO something. Not only will it feel good, it will achieve good--at least for ourselves, often for others. Inaction leaves us even more vulnerable--victims in waiting. Vulnerability isn't new. It's just more obvious. Apply thought, not just reflexes.

Red Light

I'm terrorized.
I can't quit thinking about this.
I don't feel safe anywhere.
I heard another awful rumor.
I look at everything and worry.
I'm a victim. Life's a drag.

Green Light®

I'm streetwise.
I direct my thoughts constructively.
I am well prepared and moving ahead.
I select helpful information.
I choose my view and face it
confidently.
I'm a victor. I make the best of
everything.

t rarely makes news when things go well. We never know what nasties we prevent--by our careful choices, kind concern, wise actions. Commend yourself for them anyway.

We possess the power of choice. Every day, every moment, we can choose to be fearful or confident, to worry or to do the best we can--and relax. The more we worry, the more we have to worry about. We increase our stress and decrease our health. We perform a disservice to ourselves, to those who love us--and to our world as well. Choose to be strong, caring, generous, unified people, not angry cowards, mindless followers or foolhardy revenge-seekers.

What am I undervaluing, misunderstanding or not communicating?

What people, priority, conflict or legacy needs attention?

How might I maintain a sense of optimism, control, normalcy, future?

What is my best balancing act between inertia and frenzy?

How might I best serve my family, group, society?

What are the things I need to do, to not do?

Many things are still right with the world. We won't often find them featured in the media or rising from the masses. Know whom to have faith in, to count on for a boost, for ideas and options, for a nudge in a better direction.

Respond to a question posed here. Choose an action--one that seems especially important right now. Take a few moments to think deeply about it. Notice what you feel about it. We tend to either totally avoid action or charge into things without thought. That can lead to unintended outcomes and unexpected consequences, painting our world a deeper Red. Think new thoughts. Convert them to new Green action. Green Lighters pull themselves up by their light bulbs!

How might you give someone a laugh? A break? Hope?

Who might give you a lift? A smile? Comfort?

When the going gets tough, the tough--and the wise--go Green. Okay, it may sound trite. If you read this far, you know a Red Light flicked on. (Red: the quick, unwise reflex, the rush to negative judgment.) Switch to Green and tweak the ideas to make them work for you.

Choose your dominant style. Think, "In what ways, places and situations might I Green Light® things?" Put your Green glasses on and look around. Find the good news, great role models, superb creativity, stunning courage, amazing selflessness. Discover and address community needs. Notice new possibilities, opportunities and urgencies. Everyone is Green some and Red some. How might we promote more of the good (Green) stuff and diminish more of the other (Red)?

Take action. Take care of yourself so you can better take care of others. Make a list of:

- 7 things you want to read. Read them.
- 6 people you want to meet. Meet them.
- 5 interesting places you've never seen. See them.
- 4 positive experiences you've never had. Have them.
- 3 favorite childhood activities you still like. Do them.
- 2 people you want to know better. Reach them.
- 1 new quality you'd like in your life. Grow it.

So you may not do it all. So you may only do one. Do one. It's worth a salute. You chose a constructive act and did it. ACTION--Green Light ACTION--one of the best ways out of the dumps and into the mounds--of joy.

What we see affects what we get. So what do we look at? Is it the upbeat or the downer? The disaster or the good deed? The failure or the breakthrough? The terrible stuff we won't affect or the need we can address? Red or Green? It's our choice. It's always been our choice. What color life shall we choose? Every day presents another chance to get a life--again. Take a deep breath, go out into the world and Green it up.

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