

9. DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh.
When care is pressing you down a bit --
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a fellow turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow --
You may succeed with another blow.
Often the struggler has given up
And he learned too late when the night came down,
How close he was to the golden crown.
Success is failure turned inside out --
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit --
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

Every day Bill works on his breathing. Every day Bill tries to strengthen the neck muscles he can use. Every day he scans the Internet for spinal cord research. He will keep hoping and working.

A little boy wanted to be the world's greatest baseball player. He imagined himself hitting homeruns and the crowd cheering. He went out into his back yard with his ball and bat. He threw the ball high in the air and took a powerful swing as it came down. He missed. He threw it up again and missed again. He repeated the action over and over. Finally he was exhausted and went into the house proclaiming that he was the greatest pitcher who ever lived.

Find your niche. Don't quit. Find pride in your efforts and success in your results even if you have to think outside the box. Don't quit! Even if things seem good enough, don't quit, keep trying to improve. Even if you're on the right track, if you just sit there, the train will run you over.

Sometimes we want to give up because we feel sorry for ourselves. Dr. Tennyson Guyer has something to say about that in his poem, "The World Is Mine."

The World Is Mine

Today upon a bus, I saw a girl with golden hair.
She seemed so gay, I envied her, and wished that I were half as fair.
I watched her as she rose to leave, and saw her hobble down the aisle.
She had one leg and wore a crutch, but as she passed, a smile.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine: I have two legs and the world is mine.
Later on I bought some sweets.
The boy who sold them had such charm.
I thought I'd stop and talk awhile.
If I were late 'twould do no harm.
And as we talked he said, "Thank you, sir. You've really been so kind.
It's nice to talk to folks like you because you see, I'm blind."
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine; I have two eyes and the world is mine.
Later, walking down the street, I met a boy with eyes so blue;
But he stood and watched the others play; it seemed he knew not what to do.
I paused, and then I said, "Why don't you join the others, Dear?"
But he looked straight ahead without a word, and then I knew,
He couldn't hear.

Oh, God, forgive me when I whine; I have two ears and the world is mine.

Two legs to take me where I go,
Two eyes to see the sunset's glow.
Two ears to hear all that I should know.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine,
I'm blest indeed, for the world is mine.

Bill's dad and I count our blessings every day because Bill is still "Bill." Our hearts go out to families of others whose loved ones are dead or whose minds are no longer recognizable as belonging to the ones they loved.

We are so lucky. Sure Bill has lots of physical limitations. Sure we have had some bad "breaks." There are people who tell us just accept the way things are and give up trying to improve them. We ignore their advice and we take my dad's advice. We are like racehorses. We put on our blinders so that we can keep our eyes focused straight ahead on our goals. We won't be distracted by the negative people around us. We need to focus on today to be successful in the future and we must run with all our heart and all our soul.

10. YOU MUST BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

Life does give us limitations. We must learn that if we can't change the wind, we can change the set of our sails. Part of success is aptitude but more of it is attitude. Perseverance is more powerful than anything. In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins -- not through strength, but through persistence.

A woman named Abigail was on her knees sobbing. She was in desperate need of money. She was looking to the heavens lamenting the approaching financial disaster she would face without cash. As her sobs got louder and louder she heard a booming deep voice. "Fear not, Abigail. You will win the lottery." She was overjoyed. She was saved. All was not lost. She couldn't wait until the lottery drawing. Finally the drawing came and to her surprise and horror, she did not win. She put her hopes on the next drawing and did not win again. Nor did she win at the next drawing. Time was almost up. She was in a panic. She was on her knees sobbing and moaning again. "You promised I would win the lottery. You promised and it has been weeks and what will I do and you promised -- " and on and on she cried. The deep voice boomed out again, "Abigail, BUY A LOTTERY TICKET!!!!"

We can't just wish for a better future. We must take steps to help ourselves. We must make a commitment.

A woman heard a famous pianist play and went up to him after the performance. She told him how beautiful his music was and said she would give anything to play the way he did. "Anything?" He asked. "Would you give eight hours a day, every day for twenty years of your life because that is what it takes."

It takes hard work to succeed.

Zig Ziglar tells a story of his childhood. His family was poor and he used to go down the street and sit in the neighbor's kitchen and visit with their cook. She prepared the most wonderful food he ever tasted. Her biscuits were so light they practically floated. One day she pulled a pan of biscuits from the oven. They were flat, almost as flat as pancakes. Zig asked her what happened. She gave him a big belly laugh and told him, "those biscuits got baked in the squat!"

Bill Miller is not getting baked in the squat. He is rising and growing and learning and laughing.

If you think you can or you think you can't, you are probably right.

Bill knows an education is important and he wants to go back to finish college. It may be expensive but it is a lot cheaper than ignorance. Education gives you more choices.

Bill is a person of character. He knows that if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.

He has the courage to change what he can change, he has the serenity to accept what he cannot change, and he has the wisdom to know the difference. He says that yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift, that's why it is called the "present." Carpe Diem, seize the day. Bill Miller does.

Amanda Bradley said it well:

People who know how to brighten a day
With heartwarming smiles and with kind words they say,
People who know how to gently impart
The comfort it takes to cheer somebody's heart,
People who know how to always come through
When there's anything they can possibly do,
People who know how to willingly share,
Who know how to give,

Who know how to care,
Who know how to let all their warm feelings show...
Are people that others feel lucky to know.

I feel lucky to know Bill Miller.

11. BE AN OPTIMIST

Everyone hopes good things will happen. Optimists EXPECT good things to happen. Bill is an optimist. I am a pessimist trying to be more like Bill and his dad.

Bill believes there have been many good sides to his accident. He is especially pleased that his birth mom and I now get along so well. In addition, he's met people he might not have met and learned things he might not have learned. He says he appreciates life more now. He took too many things for granted before. Family and friends are where it's at. He says he won't forget those things when he walks again.

Life has given him challenges not obstacles. The challenges are stepping stones not stumbling blocks. He will make the most of each day and get the most out of life. We would all do well to follow his example. September 11, 2001, changed everyone's outlook. But Bill, like Anne Frank, believes that people are basically good and that LIFE is good and worth fighting for.

Stem cell research seems like a good bet for a cure. Bill expects success. We hope funding will increase after more signs of progress. Bill believes and isn't afraid to spread the word.

12. GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Some of us give readily and some don't. A group of people were stranded in a cabin in the middle of nowhere in the dead of winter. The temperature was well below freezing. Each person had a small bundle of sticks. If everyone had put their sticks in turn on the fire, all would have been warm throughout the long night. But no, none would part with his or her own sticks, none would share. The next day they were all found frozen to death still grasping their sticks in their hands. They died needlessly from the cold outside because of the cold within themselves.

When you give back to the community, you reap the benefits.
Bill gives back.

One day St. Peter was giving a tour of Heaven and Hell. In Hell everyone saw a room full of people who looked to be on the verge of starvation. There was a big pot of soup in the center of the room and each person was trying to feed himself with a spoon that was much too long to do the job. Therefore, they had not eaten for a long time. In Heaven, everyone saw an almost identical room, same type of pot of soup, same type of spoons, yet here everyone looked healthy and happy. One of the group asked St. Peter what made the difference between the pain in Hell and the well being in Heaven. St. Peter answered, "Here they feed each other."

Bill helps others.

13. WHEN YOU GIVE, YOU GET.

Two couples who did not like each other escaped a sinking ship. As luck would have it, they ended up in the same lifeboat. Suddenly a hole opened at one end and started leaking water. The couple at that end started frantically to bail out the water. The man at the other end turned to his wife and said "I'm sure glad that leak isn't on our end."

We understand what he did not. We are all in the boat together. If one end goes down we all go down. We are our brother's keeper. No man is an island.

Once upon a time an ancient king set up an experiment. He placed a big rock in the middle of the main road to the castle. He hid in the bushes to see what would happen. Along came a merchant in a wagon loaded for market. He saw the stone and cursed at the inconvenience of having to go around it. He forced his tired mules off the road and around the stone and continued on his way.

Soon a soldier came strutting in his fine uniform and almost walked right into the stone. He too cursed and complained that he fought for a country -that was so poorly taken care of that stones could block the road. His complaints could still be heard as he walked around the stone and down the road. And that is how it went all day. People saw the stone and complained but did nothing to fix the problem. As the sun was setting and the king was about to give up hope, a tired young woman on her way home from working in a mill all day saw the stone. She worried that it was getting dark and someone might not see the stone and might get hurt. She struggled and struggled to move it until finally she got it rolled to the side of the road. The king came out of hiding and rewarded her with riches because she was a good citizen.

Civic responsibility means doing something, not complaining that something ought to be done. Bill is a doer.

I'd like to tell you a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Bill doesn't wait for others. He has a strong social conscience. He fights injustice every way he can and he works hard for many causes. He is an advocate for the in-exsufflator and spinal cord research. He raises funds for several charities and participates in bowling for dollars. He is generous to everyone with any kind of need.

Bill is like the person who was involved in numerous projects while trying to give her family lots of attention. As she was dressing to go read at a nursing home the phone rang. She needed to pick up a sick child at school. Before she could get out the door, the phone rang again. Her husband locked himself out of the car and needed her to bring him an extra key. The doorbell rang. Her neighbor asked her if she would watch his cats for the weekend. As she walked to her car she glanced at her watch. She was going to be late for her afternoon meeting and still had to get to a dinner meeting where she was the speaker. She tried to start her car and it wouldn't turn over. It was dead, dead, dead. She flagged down a neighbor and asked for a lift. "Where to?" he asked. She said, "It doesn't matter. They need me wherever you take me."

We all need Bill. He is always willing to look something up for us online. He is always willing to draft a greeting card or a flyer or a Power Point presentation for us. When a group needs a speaker, he never says no. When someone is depressed or needs someone to talk to, Bill listens with patience. He is the man!

He edited the United Way newsletter. He's been published in several other publications. He speaks every month at the local homeless shelter. He has done web pages for LovExtension and a PowerPoint presentation for PALS. He is always trying to help. The world is a better place because of Bill Miller. He makes "Holland" worth the trip.

14 IN CONCLUSION

I wind down my tales with an old Yiddish story: The poor man lived in a small hut with his family. They were crowded and miserable. He went to his rabbi to complain and ask for guidance. The rabbi told him to bring his chickens, cow and goat into the tiny hut and come back in two weeks. The hut was more crowded than ever with all the animals as well as all the people. The noise was awful. The smell was awful and there was no room to move. After two weeks, he went back to the rabbi and told him that he could not stand the hut another day. The rabbi told him to remove the animals. After removing the animals his hut seemed so quiet and clean and peaceful that his family lived there contentedly for many years. IT COULD ALWAYS BE WORSE.

When Bill broke his neck Jim and I were empty-nesters. Our home was very quiet and private. Then Bill came back home and everything was frantic. We had to remodel. We had nurses in and out on rotation. We had family and friends trying to help. My precious home became Grand Central Station. Now we have regular help. Bill has fewer caregiving needs and almost everything has become routine. It's a piece of cake now.

Happiness isn't getting what you want -- it is appreciating what you have. We are all pretty healthy. We have a pretty safe place to live. We have meaningful work to do and people we care about with whom we share our life's adventure. As Abe Lincoln said, "People are about as happy as they choose to be." Bill has chosen to be happy. I choose to try to follow in his footsteps or wheelchair tracks, as the case may be. While I haven't succeeded yet, I'm working on it. Whatever our troubles, we must move on with hope and optimism.

Yesterday is a canceled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note.
Today is ready cash. Spend it wisely. I continue to move ahead,
dedicated to Bill Miller.

Hakuna Matata... geen zorgen... No Worries☺.



Bill and his step mom, Donna

It's my observation that Bill's secret for staying positive and productive is that he focuses on what he can do - not on what he can't do. Consequently there aren't enough hours in the day for him to get all of his work done.

See for your self at www.mgtcorp.com and www.lookmomnohands.net - two websites that he built entirely by himself with his voice activated computer.

Jim Miller

Bill's proud dad and Donna's proud husband.