

# Adversity Motivates

Years ago, when Bear Bryant was coaching the University of Alabama's football team, the Crimson Tide was ahead by only six points in a game with less than two minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.



Bryant sent his quarterback into the game with instructions to play it safe and run out the clock. In the huddle, the quarterback said, "Coach says to play it safe, but that's what they are expecting. Let's give them a surprise." And with that, he called a pass play.

When the quarterback dropped back and threw the pass, the defending cornerback, who was a champion sprinter, intercepted the ball and headed for the end zone expecting to score a touchdown. The quarterback, who was not known as a good runner, took off after the cornerback and ran him down from behind, tackling him on the five-yard line. It saved the game.

After the clock ran out, the opposing coach approached Bryant and said, "What's this business about your quarterback not being a runner? He ran down my speedster from behind!"

Bryant responded, "Your man was running for six points. My man was running for his life."

Nothing can motivate a person like adversity. "I think failure is one of the great motivators," said Olympic diver Pat McCormick. "After my narrow loss in the 1948 trials, I knew how really good I could be. It was the defeat that focused all my concentration on my training and goals." McCormick went on to win two gold medals in the Olympics in London that year, and another two in Helsinki four years later.

John C. Maxwell, author and speaker, also believes that adversity is a stimulator. "If you can step back from the negative circumstance you face in life, you will be able to discover that there are positive benefits to your negative experiences," he wrote in his book *Attitude 101*. "That is almost always true; you simply have to be willing to look for them – and not take the adversity you are experiencing too personally."

If you try something daring and survive, "think about what you learned about yourself – and how it will help you take on new challenges," Maxwell added. "If a restaurant gets your order wrong, figure out if it's an opportunity to learn a new skill ... Try, and you can find the good in every bad experience."

Good advice from McCormick and Maxwell. Every day is a learning experience in the mission we are called to do. Everything we plan doesn't always turn out the way we intended. Find the lesson in it.