

## The Old Mule in the Well

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well.

The farmer heard the mule braying (or whatever mules do when they fall into wells). After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving.

Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened – and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel-load of dirt landed on his back, he should shake it off and step up. This he did, blow after blow.

“Shake it off and step up ... shake it off and step up .. shake it off and step up!” he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows or distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought panic and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up.

You're right. You've figured it out. It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well.

What seemed like it would bury him actually blessed him – all because of the manner in which he handled this adversity.



Such is life. When things start to look hopeless, choose persistence. If we face our problems and respond to them positively, refusing to surrender to panic, bitterness or self-pity, the adversities that come along to bury us often possess the potential to benefit us. But it's only through persistence that we can realize that potential.

President Calvin Coolidge put it this way: “Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan *Press On!* Has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”

(more)

Keep in mind that forgiveness, faith, prayer, praise and hope are all excellent ways to “shake it off and step up” out of the wells in which we find ourselves.

*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up (Galatians 6:9 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter