



# *Mountains Into Molehills*

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*Mountains Into Molehills is a free internet book which aims to build understanding of self and others. It integrates relevant theory with practical step by step guides to coping with stressful situations, and handling difficult situations assertively.*

## *Chapter Thirteen The Spiritual Dimension*

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## *1. How's your faith?*

Whilst this chapter testifies to my belief its purpose is not to sell my or any other particular model of belief. I wrote it because in holding on to my faith when doubts crept in, I have had to answer some difficult questions to my own satisfaction. I hope you will find my answers to these questions as helpful to you as they are to me.

In talking about faith I don't mean religion: I mean faith in a spiritual power which inspired all religions: a spiritual power that transcends our understanding. I use the word God as shorthand for this spiritual power. I don't believe that God is a white haired old gentleman who has a particular interest in keeping me and mine safe.

I do believe that there is a spiritual power which transcends our understanding. I have repeatedly found that when life has been really difficult, and I have found comfort and strength in prayer. This is why I still find 'Footsteps' [see later] so moving. On those occasions when I have prayed for help in finding solutions I have found that some brand new and very helpful thought arrives in my mind, sometimes very quickly, sometimes more slowly. Where the new thoughts comes from I don't know.....

*Difficult Question One*                      *How can there be a God when natural disasters, tragedies, injustices, and acts of pure evil are everyday occurrences? Surely, if there is a God these things wouldn't be allowed to happen!*

Surely this is only considering part of the evidence? There are two sides to this story!

We may choose to see natural disasters, tragedies, and acts of pure evil as proof that there is no God, 'because if there was a God he wouldn't allow it to happen '.

Alternatively we may choose to notice the rest of the evidence, the other side to the coin; notice that out of tragedy and evil springs good. If we look at the way we human beings respond to tragedy, crisis and pain with love, courage, generosity, and self sacrifice there is evidence of good. For example, the catastrophe in January 2005, when tsunamis struck part of south east Asia and killed over 200,000 gentle people, brought an amazing world wide response.

I prefer to believe that senseless tragedy and evil provide evidence for God because of the love, courage, generosity, and self sacrifice of those who respond to the needs of the victims. I believe that the tragedy and evil are despite God, not because there is not a God.

*Difficult Question Two      How can God exist - there is no scientific theory and no tangible evidence? Scientifically speaking God is impossible!*

When in conversations with people who say 'God is impossible' I sometimes ask 'If you know what is possible or not possible perhaps you could help me understand some other things to which science has no answer to but which are clearly so!?'

? What was before 'the big bang' which scientists use to explain the birth of planet earth? How do you explain the universe? It is vast beyond belief. Scientists have estimated that if a spaceship left planet earth every hour and travelled at the speed of light [2000 miles a second] it would take 20 million years to put a spaceship on each of the stars in our Milky Way Galaxy – which is estimated to be just one of 100 billion galaxies.

? How do you explain how its possible for us to be here. Our whole galaxy, with us in it, is estimated to be traveling outward; from we don't know where to we don't know where, at 200 miles a second. Incredible, but a fact – an impossible fact!

? How come that the most brilliant scientific minds on the planet keep changing their theory about the biggest scientific question of all - the nature and origins of the universe? The latest thinking contradicts earlier thinking. Now the theory is that there is not just our universe, there are many universes; and they are not infinite they are spherical. What is the truth – it is currently beyond our imagination.

? How do we explain the development of the human brain – the most complex organism known to us and about which we still understand so little?

? If we had been alive a hundred years ago what would we have said to someone who predicted that within a hundred years it would be an everyday occurrence for 300 people at a time to fly in metal ships across oceans and continents? What would we have said when this person prophesied and explained computers, the internet, satellites, mobile phones, television, cars, microsurgery, and genetic engineering etc etc. Maybe we would have said 'Impossible' and had them placed in a secure unit!

If we had been around earlier in history would we have joined the scientists who still insisted that the earth was flat and the sun revolved around the earth? Would we too have condemned those who thought otherwise?

*Surely, based on scientific theory alone, our very existence is impossible.*

When so many aspects of our own existence are impossible to explain how can we be experts on what is possible or not? Over the centuries we have repeatedly believed that some things were impossible only to be proved wrong by the march of human discovery

There is so much we have yet to understand, and may never understand. I recently heard an internationally acclaimed scientist on radio declaring, 'Its much too complex: the human mind is not yet ready to be able to understand it. Us humans trying to understand the universe and the nature of existence is about as difficult as a dolphin trying to understand quantum physics'.

Albert Einstein, arguably the greatest scientist so far, died a believer in some higher presence. Doesn't that speak for itself!

We humans have persistently believed that we know what is possible or not: yet the more we know the more we discover how little we know.

For me God is no less possible than our very existence which, on the basis of scientific knowledge and understanding, is clearly impossible. All the scientific answers cannot explain even the most basic fact – we exist!

Faith means 'belief in the absence of proof'.

Our choice is to believe or disbelieve!

I have made my choice!

## 2. Footsteps

*One night I had a dream.*

*I dreamed I was walking along the beach with God, and across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed there were two set of footprints in the sand, one belonged to me and the other to God.*

*When the latest scene of my life flashed before us I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at times along the path of life there was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that this happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life. This really bothered me, and I asked God about it.*

*'God, you once said that if I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way, but I noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why in times when I needed you most you would leave me'.*

*God replied 'My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you during your times of trials and suffering. When you see only one set of footprints it was when I carried you'.*

*Anon*

*This poem still moves me because it reminds me of the strength I found when I most needed it. BM*



### 3. Starfish

*A young girl was walking along a beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up during a storm. As she came to each starfish she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean.*

*She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, 'Why are you wasting your time doing this? Look around the beach! You can't save these starfish. They are destined to die and you can't make a difference!'*

*The girl became sad and felt discouraged, but after a few moments she bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it back into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and said 'I made a difference to that one'.*

*Anonymous*

*'The greatest mistake is to do nothing just because you can only do a little'*

*However, don't feel guilty when you have to say 'No' sometimes – you can't save all the starfish!*

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#### *4. Do not stand at my grave and weep*

*This beautiful poem is really helpful for those who mourn*

*Do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there, I do not sleep  
I am a thousand winds that blow  
I am the diamond glint on snow  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain  
I am the gentle autumn rain  
When you awake in the mornings hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight  
I am the soft stars that shine at night  
Do not stand at my grave and cry  
I am not there – I did not die*

*Traditional*

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## 5. A Prayer for Strength and Guidance

*I do not understand how you can be; I do not understand what you are  
Any more than I understand how the universe can be, but is.  
If the universe were not a fact, they would say that it too is impossible,  
But unlike the impossible universe, we cannot prove that you are.  
Faith or disbelief, the choice is ours.*

*Nearly all my life I have enjoyed the blessing that is faith.  
At times my faith has flickered, flickered like a candle in the wind,  
But the light that lights my life has never gone out.  
After all these years I still do not understand how you can be,  
But I no longer need to understand, for I know for certain that you are.*

*I see your presence in so many ways in the world around me.  
Amid the selfishness, greed, and cruelty I see countless acts of love  
Of compassion, countless acts of generosity and self sacrifice.  
Let me never again forget your presence as I busy myself with the day.  
Let me always remember the support that is mine for the asking.*

*This dark day I turn to you yet again.  
I need to feel your strength once more, for my duty grows painful,  
And the choices before me difficult.  
Loving God, give me the strength to do my duty  
And the wisdom to know what my duty is.*

*4<sup>th</sup> November 1990*

*I have often found comfort in writing prayers when life was tough. I wrote this  
prayer in 1990 at a particularly difficult time in my life...*

*BM*

## *6. One Day At A Time*

*Put aside yesterday, with its mistakes, regrets, and pain,  
Leave to-morrow alone, with its uncertainty and fears,  
Choose to live in today, in each moment.  
You can survive one day at a time,  
You can recover one day at a time,  
You can build and rebuild one day at a time.*

*Will you throw away the future reaching back into the past?  
Will you let your mind drift on the uncertain seas of the future?  
Living is so much harder when we lose each today in reliving past pain,  
And in creating nightmares out of future fears,  
Pain and fears which blot out sunshine from our lives.*

*The bottle of life is no longer full, perhaps it never was,  
But seeing that it's half full rather than half empty  
Can transform the way you feel,  
Can transform the way your life is heading.  
Every new day is the beginning of the rest of your life,  
Will you throw it away reliving yesterday and fearing tomorrow?*

*Brian Martin*

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## 7. Couples

*Love one another, but make not a bond of love:  
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls....  
Sing and dance together and be joyous:  
But let each one of you be alone....  
And stand together, yet not too near together:  
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,  
And the oak and the cypress grow not in each others shadow.*

Gilbran

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## 8. Please Hear What I Am Not Saying

*Don't be fooled by the masks I wear.  
I give the impression that I'm secure,  
That confidence is my name and coolness my game,  
That I need no-one.*

*Don't you believe it?  
Behind my mask is the real me,  
Sometimes afraid, sometimes confused, sometimes lonely.  
Deep down I'm afraid that I am just not good enough,  
Afraid that you will see this and reject me.*

*And so I wear a mask.  
I tell you things that are really nothing,  
And nothing of things that are everything.  
Please listen for what I'm not saying,  
For when you are sensitive to my needs,  
Empathic in your understanding,  
My heart grows wings and you help release me from my prison.*

*It may not be easy for you to help me,  
Sometimes when you approach me my fear may cause me to bite.  
Please be patient and dismantle my walls with firm but gentle hands,  
For my child within is afraid and shy.*

*Who am I you may wonder?  
I am someone you know very well.  
For I am everyone you meet,  
And I am also you.*

Anonymous

## 9. The Journey to Personal Fulfillment

*The journey to being what you are capable of being, to becoming what you are capable of becoming, will not be completed quickly or with a giant leap. Nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished easily. The journey will take many steps – some small, some large, some easy, some painful. As with the longest journey, which starts with a single step, so is the journey to self fulfillment. All there is to do is choose the next step, and decide when you will take it.*

*BM*

*If you do what you have always done.....  
..... you will get what you have always got*

*If you want to change your life's course  
Plan what to do differently  
For a life's course is set, and which will not change  
Unless by accident, or you make it change.  
It is in your power to choose,  
To choose to change the way your life is heading.*

*Anon*

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## *10. The Giant Within*

*'There is a giant within each of us, it seeks and needs the light that never fails. If we feed it each day, in the right way, it will become a part of us which will conquer our fears, slay our dragons, and carry us to our victories. It is a magical genie of untold powers impatiently waiting for its release. It is the essential self fulfilling part of us. It has been waiting for us to set it free'.*

*Shad Helmstetter 'What To Say When You Talk To Yourself'*

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## *11. Commitment Is Key To Achievement*

*'Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative [and creation] there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.*

*I have learned deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets: 'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.'*

*WH Murray*

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## *12. If you think you are beaten*

*If you think you are beaten, you are  
If you think you dare not, you don't  
If you'd like to win but think you can't  
It's almost certain you won't  
If you think you'll lose, you've lost  
For out of the world we find  
Success begins with will –  
It's all a state of mind.*

*If you think you are outclassed, you are.  
You've got to think high to rise,  
You've got to be sure of yourself before  
You can ever win a prize.  
Life's battles don't always go  
To the stronger or faster man  
But sooner or later the man who wins  
Is the one who thinks he can?*

*Anon*

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### *13. The Power of Vision*

*Extracts from the speech made by Martin Luther King on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial*

*.....I say to you today my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.*

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal."*

*I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down at the table of brotherhood.*

*.....I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.*

*I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama .....will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and little white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.*

*.....This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the south. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.*

*Martin Luther King*

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## 14. Success

*To laugh often and much,  
To win the respect of intelligent people  
And the affection of children,  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics  
And endure the betrayal of false friends,  
To appreciate beauty,  
To find the best in others,  
To leave the world a bit better  
Whether by a healthy child,  
A garden patch,  
Or a redeemed social condition,  
To know that even one life  
Has breathed easier because you have lived.  
This is to have succeeded.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*'No life is ever wasted which lightens the burdens of others'*

*Anon*

*'A rich man is someone who is satisfied with what he has'*

*Anon*

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## *15. Risk*

*To laugh is to risk appearing a fool  
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental  
To reach out for another is to risk involvement  
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self  
To place your ideas, your dreams, before the crowd is to risk loss*

*To love is to risk not being loved in return  
To live is to risk dying  
To hope is to risk despair  
To try is to risk failure*

*But risks must be taken  
Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.  
The person who risks nothing does nothing, has nothing, is nothing.  
He may avoid suffering and sorrow,  
But he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live.  
Chained by his certitudes he is a slave: he has forfeited freedom.*

*Only a person who risks is free.*

*Anonymous*

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*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait, and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And don't look too good, nor talk too wise.*

*If you can dream, and not make dreams you master;  
If you can think, and not make thoughts your aim,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat these two imposters just the same,  
If you can bear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools.*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss.  
If you can force your heart, and nerve, and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they have gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the will which says to them 'Hold on'.*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with kings – nor lose your common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much,  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds worth of distance run  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And, which is more – you'll be a man my son*

*Rudyard Kipling*

*In loving memory of Tom Cartwright who died far too soon. He inspired me, and changed my life, by reciting it to me in the office one morning when I was eighteen years old.*