

How To Crack Into The C.E.M.E.N.T. Of Wholeness

You don't think of a blade of grass as strong. In fact, it's so fragile that it can be easily trampled underfoot, consumed by a cow, or cut by a lawnmower blade. And yet, this insignificant piece of greenery, this blade of grass that gets stepped on and gobbled up, has the amazing power to push through something as hard and unyielding as cement!

A soft, vulnerable piece of grass can, through the momentum of its own growth and the strength of its root system, push through and eventually crack a solid cement sidewalk.

When you compare yourself to a blade of grass, you'll find remarkable similarities. Like the grass, you're soft and vulnerable, easily crushed by putdowns and insults. Your feelings can be easily trampled, your energy consumed trying to please others, and your dreams unintentionally cut down by the very people who care about you the most. Yes, you're fragile – but like the blade of grass, you're stronger than you seem. You have the inner strength and determination to crack into the . of wholeness and break through the barrier of negativity that threatens to hold you back from reaching your potential.

Every one of us has, at some point in life, been told what we can't do. People name us—slow, unremarkable, lacking, untalented, and so on—and we buy into it. We allow their assessments to stop us. We receive what people tell us and take it to heart, where it festers like a disease.

But you know what? They're wrong about us, and we don't have to accept what they say. Like the blade of grass, every one of us can do more than we realize and push through seemingly solid barriers.

When I was younger, some people said I'd never write well or speak well because of learning disabilities I was dealing with at the time and because of situations I went through.

They were wrong. I managed to get past their criticisms and negativity, but only by working through the steps I outline for you here. This is how you, too, can crack into the . of wholeness and live the abundant life God has in mind for you:

C: Confidence In God's Relationship

Even when it seems nobody believes in you, there is One who does. No matter what comes your way or how alone you feel, God is there for you. So C represents having confidence in God's relationship. As the Bible states,

"For the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared." (Proverbs 3:26, NIV)

Whenever doubts surface and you feel uncertain about your own abilities, turn to God. The Lord will be your confidence at your side. You can be sure that He will be there for you.

E: Educate Yourself

In school I faced challenges, but I quickly learned that I was as capable as anyone else, and the key to achieving academic success and feeling whole was to educate myself. I had to learn how to read well. Yes, I overcame my learning disabilities, and you too can overcome your individual challenges. For me, learning to read well involved listening to tapes, finding a mentor, and studying. There were no shortcuts, but there were answers, and I found them.

As they say, practice makes perfect. Keep working at it and you will get better. Educate yourself through books, poems, history, everything. President Obama regularly tells his daughters to read, write, read, and read. According to his wife Michelle, he's a voracious reader and that's part of what

makes him such a strong communicator. Even if you don't have the opportunity for a formal education, you can educate yourself by reading, studying, and finding a mentor willing to work with you. It's doable!

M: Meditate On The Word Of God

Wholeness involves every dimension of yourself; while education enhances the mind, meditation builds you spiritually. Meditate on the word of God and watch how your inner strength multiplies. The Book of Joshua states,

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." (Joshua 1:8, NIV)

Indeed, meditating and reflecting on God's word keeps you aligned with the truth. It gives you strength to proceed. It fills you with an inner peace that assures you that you are where you need to be, and that God is guiding your path. In this way, the naysayers won't be able to touch you, because you'll have God's word of authority supporting you.

E: Exercise And Eat Healthy

To achieve wholeness you must address your physical side too, and two excellent means for attaining physical wellness are exercise and diet. When you exercise—and I'm talking about an activity of your choice, something that gets you moving and that you enjoy doing—all the systems of your body benefit, including your heart, lungs, and metabolism. In addition you feel good; it's been shown that physical activity can lift your mood and minimize symptoms of depression.

Likewise with food; the right combination and levels of nutrients keep our minds and bodies functioning at their optimum. When we eat right we feel our best, giving us a better opportunity to be whole in every sense. A fit, healthy

body can support us and serve us well, giving us the strength to hold on to our convictions and ignore those who try to bring us down.

N: No More Negative Thinking

It's very important that you surround yourself with all that is good. What you focus on becomes what you see; if you focus on faults, imperfections, and harshness, these will color your world. Avoid getting bogged down with negative stuff; instead, erase negative thinking from your mind. Do as the Bible says:

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2, NIV)

By eliminating negative thinking and embracing positive thinking, you are transformed by the renewing of your mind. You align yourself with God's will. In this way, you reach a level of goodness and wholeness that benefits not only you, but also everyone you encounter.

It's interesting to note that in the Romans 12:2 Bible passage, the Greek word for "transformed" is metaphor, which is related to the English word metamorphosis. In biology, metamorphosis is a process involving a noticeable and relatively abrupt change in the body structure through growth and a standout distinction. So even from the most basic biological viewpoint, a metamorphosis or transformation involves a very distinct change along with growth. Being transformed through the elimination of negative thinking is a very real process, then, with very real results.

T: Take The Trash Out Of You

Just as we take the trash out every week for the sanitation workers to take away, we must also regularly take the emotional trash out of ourselves in order to stay healthy and

whole. In his book, *Before You Do: Making Great Decisions That You Won't Regret*, author T.D. Jakes talks about the importance of getting rid of our baggage. He wisely makes the point that taking our junk out of our trunk is the only way to move on in life.

We must start by releasing compassion towards others. When we practice compassion, and when we stop playing the game of blaming others for our challenges and difficulties, we bring ourselves many steps closer to a greater sense of wholeness. By throwing out our emotional trash, we make space for God's healing words and a more positive outlook to enter in.

We make room for healthy transformation. We make room for growth to take place so that we can push through all barriers that stand in our way. And by pushing through and persevering, just like that little blade of grass, we can attain that complete wholeness we seek.

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