

Stop Pressing Rewind! Hit Delete!

I am an authority on the art of feeling stuck! Even my parents can testify about how I orchestrated situations in my early childhood that left me feeling as if I'd built an impenetrable wall around myself.

When I was 3, my parents pastored a new, upstart church while dealing with their very strong-willed little girl. One Sunday evening they decided they would no longer fight me, so they brought me to the altar and prayed that I would be released from the spirit of agitation that was harassing not only me but also my parents. My parents were realizing I was a child who would need constant direction to learn to use her strong will for good.

Each night at bedtime, my parents would tenderly lay me in my beautiful canopy bed, pray over me, read me a Bible story, turn out the light and whisper, "Good night." Then they would walk across the hall, close the bedroom door behind them and get ready for sleep.

Within ten minutes, I would leave my bed and lie on the floor outside their bedroom door, screaming and sobbing until they allowed me into their bed to sleep between them. This pattern continued for such a long time that no matter what situation we faced, I always got my way. I am not recommending tantrum throwing. I am only reporting that it worked—to a point.

Over time, I realized that my strong will needed to be used in healthier ways. I developed a determination to use that strong will for the glory of the kingdom. So in my most trying times, I refuse to allow the enemy to steal my joy. That joy came at a very high price: it cost me 36 years of trying to do it on my own to show the world I could make it, then falling lower

than I could ever have imagined. But the story didn't end there, because I allowed God to pick me up, mold me and make me into His vessel.

The truth is that exerting your will has its place. When you get stuck in circumstances that keep you from your God-given potential, you have to develop the will to push past your "stuckness."

My parents always looked for teachers and school programs that would provide me a first-rate education. When I was in the seventh grade, they enrolled my brother and me in a very popular Christian school with about 500 students.

This proved to be a difficult turning point for me. My parents chose the school because it had a class for students with learning problems.

I had always thought I was a smart, funny, balanced kid. However, the longer I stayed in that class, the more I questioned my sanity. I thought, "Maybe I think I'm normal but I'm in this other kind of special."

These thoughts weighed on me. I got so quiet that my parents would ask, "Has someone hurt you? Are the other kids being mean to you?"

When I couldn't take it any longer, I told my parents how I felt. I explained that I looked and acted normal, yet I was in a class with kids whose challenges seemed much more serious than mine. I wondered whether my parents knew something that I didn't know. Was I less functional than I realized? Did I not understand how broken I was?

My parents began weeping and explained that because of my learning disability, they thought a Christian school with a custom class was best for me. At that point they realized that it was destroying my self-esteem. Being in that class made me feel so much like a loser that I no longer believed in myself.

My parents immediately withdrew me from the school and transferred me back to public school. However, I was still in a class for the learning disabled. I knew in my gut that I did not need that kind of help, so I asked my parents to give me a chance to prove it. I was tired of being labeled and I believed I could make it in regular classes. It would mean letting God help me. So my parents and I prayed for God to give us wisdom to make the right decisions for my future.

When I got to high school, I had to press through, and it forced me to change. I had to help God help me. To succeed in regular classes, I had to participate in class. That meant being willing to work hard.

Are you getting the point? Your situations and labels may be different from mine, but the ways you get free are similar. I have learned in my “life college” that class participation is a necessary prerequisite to freedom. I have to act. In other words, I have to cooperate with what God is doing in my life.

Because I allowed God to help me move out of my learning disabled “prison,” I learned how to break out of many more.

✖ *Adapted from When Your Bad Meets His Good—Find Purpose in Your Pain by Kimberly Jones-Pothier, copyright 2018, published by Charisma House.* The author faced the choice of allowing her circumstances to define who she is and her future, or trust God. When she worked in partnership with God, she overcame what would have kept her in a “mental prison.”

Prayer Power, Week of Feb. 3, 2019

This week, thank God that His plan and ability overcome your disabilities when you allow Him to help you. Ask Him to direct each step you take to fulfill your life’s purpose. Know that His plans for you are good, and you will see them fulfilled as you trust Him and walk in obedience. Ask Him for divine appointments and opportunities to be a blessing to others. Continue to pray that God will pour out His Spirit on this

nation and bring forgiveness, love, unity and healing to the divisions that plagues the land. Pray that our leaders would move with godly wisdom when making decisions. Read Jeremiah 29:11, 33:3.