

# Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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## Facing the Storm

A Wyoming cowboy was once asked what the greatest lesson he'd learned from his experiences of ranching was.

"The Herefords taught me one of life's most important lessons," he replied. "We used to breed cattle for a living, but the winter storms would come and kill 'em off. It would take a terrible toll on the herd. Time and time again, after a cold winter storm, we'd find most of our cattle piled up against the fences, dead as doornails!"

"They would turn their backs to the icy wind, and slowly drift downward until the fences stopped them. There, they just piled up and died. But the Herefords were different than that," he continued. "They would head straight into the wind and slowly walk the other way until they came to the upper boundary fence where they stood, facing the storm. We always found our Herefords alive and well. They saved their hides by facing the storm!"

When the storms of life are raging, our natural inclination is to duck and hide. It is easier to turn our backs on reality than to face the brutal facts.

The path of least resistance, however, is a deadly course. Instead, we must face the storm head-on! When a problem arises in your life, you have to face it before you can fix it. Facing life's storms brings renewed strength, hope, and power for living:

### 1. Facing the storm strengthens character.

"Softies" who have never experienced any hardship tend to go all to pieces whenever troubles arise. "Oh no! The sky is falling!" If the sky falls on you a few times, and you're still kicking, you realize that you can make it! You are too big of a person to let the little problems get you. One day when I was in a jam, a good friend remarked, "Not to worry -- Your ship was made to sail in seas like these!"

### 2. Facing the storm sweetens the spirit.

The sweetest people I've ever met are those who have endured much hardship. Somehow, they figured out how to come through it all rejoicing. Of course, negative processing can leave a person sour and bitter -- I've met plenty of those. But if you're determined to stay sweet, the problems will make you sweeter.

### 3. Facing the storm deepens compassion.

When we suffer, we are more able to identify with others who are hurting. My friend and co-worker, Tim Young, is a good example of that. An accident several years ago left him with chronic stabbing pain in his back and legs. He bears an unusually heavy cross. Instead of using this as an excuse to stay bottled up in himself, however, he has transformed this pain into a deep compassion for others. Tim is one of the most caring people I've ever met, and is a living example of what Henri Nouwen calls, "the wounded healer."

### 4. Facing the storm broadens the horizon.

Hardship helps us to look forward to better days. It makes us realize that our current situation isn't forever, this world is not our home, and the best is yet to come.

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