

A vibrant rainbow background with a blue sky and white clouds at the top, transitioning through yellow, orange, and red to a dark blue at the bottom.

**FIND THE
UPSIDE**

**OF
THE**

**How To Turn Your
Worst Experiences
Into Your Best
Opportunities!**

**DOWN
TIMES**

DR. ROB PENNINGTON

FIND THE
UPSIDE
OF **How To Turn Your**
THE Worst Experiences
Into Your Best
DOWN Opportunities!
TIMES

DR. ROB PENNINGTON

Resource International
Houston, Texas

Copyright © 2011 by Resource International

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

Published by
Resource International
6119 Bankside Drive
Houston, TX 77096

www.resource-i.com

ISBN: 978-0-9832759-0-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011923793

Text and Cover Design: Suzanne Pustejovsky Design, Austin, Texas
Copyediting: Jamie Fuller
Composition: RRG Graphics

Second printing, July 2011

F O R

Bob and Frances Pennington

I have been very blessed to have two exemplary parents, Bob and Frances. They have always been there, watching out for me in ways to which I was often completely oblivious. They have each been a consistent support through all the ups and downs of my life, through my successes and failures, through my worst times and through my best. Some of these challenges are described in this book, but many others are personal memories for us to remember and appreciate.

I dedicate this book to my parents. Their consistent devotion and love have been for me the perfect example of the primary lesson of this book, i.e., that blessings are possible even in the most difficult times.

I love you both very much.



Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though sometimes it is hard to realize this.

For the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and griefs which we endure help us in our marching onward.

—Henry Ford



D I S C L A I M E R

The purpose of this book is to educate and entertain. This book is sold with the understanding that the publisher and author are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

For more information, see the list of resources at the end of the book.

CONTENTS

Foreword	9
Acknowledgments	11
Preface	15
<i>How to multiply the benefits of this book</i>	
Chapter 1 It's a Miracle!	20
<i>Being shot in the chest shows Rob that negative experiences can be transformed into something worthwhile.</i>	
Chapter 2 Turn a Worry into a Goal	30
<i>Rob discovers how to get his medical bills covered despite having no health insurance.</i>	
Chapter 3 Failure Leads to Success	42
<i>With the encouragement of a friend, Rob discovers how to turn the struggle to pass his college foreign language requirement to his advantage.</i>	
Chapter 4 Losing a Job, Gaining a Career	54
<i>Presented with divorce papers and a pink slip within a short period of time, Rob takes an unexpected journey that leads to a more successful career path than he ever imagined.</i>	

Chapter 5	Easy Come, Easy Go—Not!	68
	<i>Unforeseen financial losses require Rob to change in ways that lead to surprising gains.</i>	
Chapter 6	Help!	76
	<i>Although being audited by the IRS was frightening, Rob discovered the value of asking for help that made it a pleasure.</i>	
Chapter 7	It's the Little Things	88
	<i>Learning not to take his wife's difficult behavior personally was one of Rob's hardest and most important lessons.</i>	
Chapter 8	The Gift of Giving	100
	<i>Rob reveals the challenges and the blessings he and Clair shared as she wrestled with multiple sclerosis, the disease that ultimately took her life.</i>	
Chapter 9	Lessons Learned	116
	<i>No matter how daunting the challenge or how overwhelming the fear we face, there is always a step that can be taken that can lead to a positive outcome.</i>	
Resources		123
About the Author		127
Praise from Experts		129

FOREWORD

BY STEPHEN HASLAM

When Steven Spielberg was making *Jaws*, much of the movie was scripted to show many scenes of the shark, from the opening sequence throughout the movie. But the mechanical shark never worked as the filmmakers had hoped. Day in and day out, month after month the shark failed to perform as needed. Over budget and behind schedule, the studio threatened daily to fire Spielberg as the director. In the end, with his future employment riding on how he salvaged the disaster, Steven re-wrote the script.

He decided to focus less on a real shark and more on the shark as an implied peril. This change produced a much more emotionally terrifying movie, more a Hitchcock than a Godzilla, than was originally conceived. In the end, the impossible conditions transformed the movie into the first summer blockbuster, the highest-grossing film of all time, all because the shark didn't work.

Many years later Spielberg said of this circumstance, "This would be both the worst experience of my career and the greatest experience of my career!"*

The basic idea of this book is that life throws at us experiences that may seem overwhelming, depressing, unfortunate, or

*Biography Channel, "The Inside Story: *Jaws*"

simply unfair. We often describe these to other people as, “It was one of the worst things that ever happened to me.” If we can learn to view these challenges in a different way, we can turn the worst things that ever happened into the best things that ever happened.

However, as Rob Pennington says, this is much easier said than done. You may think that some people are born with such a natural optimism that nothing gets them down. But if that is what we need to succeed against the challenges life throws at us, the rest of us are doomed. That’s not fair either! It’s a good thing this is not exactly true; we are not doomed!

Each of the stories you will read in this book is true. Rob was shot, got fired, and was audited by the IRS, and he cared for a wife with a catastrophic illness. Every time life threw one of those challenges at him he learned something, and along the way he developed a deeper understanding of what it is to survive and thrive. Those of us who know Rob personally will attest that the wonderful man he is today is the result of how he learned through the school of hard knocks to deal with all those devastating, depressing, unfortunate, and unfair things that life threw at him. From his insights, we can all learn how to turn the worst things that happen to us into the best opportunities for success.

PREFACE

The lessons presented in this book were learned the hard way, in the proverbial school of hard knocks. I've been shot, I've been fired, I've been divorced, and I've been audited by the IRS! I cared for a spouse with a catastrophic illness for thirty years until she passed away. Every one of these miserable situations hit me unexpectedly. I thought each one was one of the worst things that ever happened to me. My first reaction was usually "This isn't fair! Why is this happening to me?"

THE PROVERBIAL SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

Sometimes it is hard to imagine something good coming out of something bad. It was for me. When undesirable circumstances happen, the pain, grief, and fear can be overwhelming. All we can think is "This shouldn't be happening to me" and "It will probably get worse." That is normal.

One thing my training as a psychologist taught me is that we are creatures of habit. We cannot control our first reaction to anything. That first reaction is a habit. But the school of hard knocks taught me that we can do something about our second reaction, and that can make all the difference between being cursed or blessed by the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

Even though I do have a habit of responding initially with fear and doubt and worry and stress, by considering a second, more positive response that could lead me in a more productive direction, I learned to see possibilities and opportunities I had not recognized at first. As a result, I would feel more positive emotions and find more constructive behaviors. Time and time again I found a way to take a negative and turn it into a positive. Each chapter of this book is an example.

So, yes, I have felt hurt and pain and grief and fear. I still do. But I have also felt blessed, and that has made all the difference. With faith in God and help from others, I have discovered strengths I did not know I had and that I might not have found had it not been for the challenge. I discovered how I could move from viewing a challenge as one of the worst things that could happen to eventually recognizing it as one of the best things. I'm sure you've had similar experiences at times in your life. The goal is to have the recognition come more quickly.

My hope is that by benefiting from my journey, you, too, will be able to move more quickly through your initial negative reactions to challenges and discover hidden blessings that allow you to feel grateful as well, now and in the future.

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THIS BOOK

This can be more than just another book that you read and then put on the shelf. You could use it to create an experience that could transform the quality of the rest of your life, as the experiences in this book have done for me. Let me make a few suggestions for how you might produce the greatest benefits for yourself by reading this book.

Read One Chapter at a Time

Each chapter follows a particular format.

1. *Story: A true story from my life, although they are not presented here in chronological order.*
2. *Lesson to remember: A point to remember, summarizing the lesson I learned through the experience of my story.*
3. *Activity: A recommended activity for you to complete at the end of each chapter that can help you apply the chapter's point to remember in your own life.*

The Story: Let me make a few points about how these stories are presented. First, every story is perfectly true. But the stories are not presented here in chronological order. This book is not meant to be an autobiography but is instead a collection of unexpected and challenging situations from which I learned valuable lessons.

This book is not a novel that introduces a character, establishes a conflict, builds to a climax of transformation, and then resolves the conflict at the end. Real life is more complicated than that. This book is a series of true-to-life situations that happen to normal people.

Sometimes as soon as one challenge is resolved, another challenge hits unexpectedly. At other times life hits us with a combination of challenges all at once. Sometimes the resolution comes to us in a flash of insight; sometimes we must earn the win through a long grind over months or even years. Keep this in mind as you read through my experiences so you don't get lost in trying to follow a sequence.

In each story I try to describe the events as I remember them. Of course, the description is made through the lens of hindsight,

so you might not feel the intensity of the emotional roller coaster of doubt, fear, worry, anger, confusion, and even depression that I felt. Instead, I hope you will notice a distinct sense of humor. Looking for the humor in challenging situations is one of the keys I have learned for turning conflicts into success.

Even though each chapter is only a few pages long and you could easily read a number of chapters in a short sitting, I suggest that you not fly through it that way. Let each story and each associated lesson simmer in your mind for at least a day or two before you jump into the next chapter.

Often we read words, but we do not absorb their meaning. Give yourself the luxury of practicing patience. Give yourself the treat of dwelling a little longer to contemplate and to review any idea or concept in which you find some value. If you find a whole chapter valuable, then by all means please reread it. You are likely to see ideas you did not notice the first time, even though you read every word.

By giving yourself time to absorb one chapter at a time, you will multiply the impact of the beneficial results that can be produced.

Do the Activity at the End of Each Chapter

Reading each story can be inspirational. But the story is only valuable to the extent that you benefit from my experience. You can literally save yourself time and pain by using my experience to learn a lesson that might take you much longer on your own. You do that by creating a way to make a change in your life. That is why an activity has been designed for each chapter, to help you apply the chapter's lesson in your life.

As will be explained more at the end of the book, to know and not to do is not to know. The activity at the end of each chapter

is designed for you to apply as soon as you complete the chapter, when you have the chapter's story and point to remember fresh in your mind and heart. By applying the inspiration, you can go beyond insight to transformation. Take the opportunity to practice developing discipline by following this repeating three-step process (story, lesson, activity) and then pausing for a day or two.

By practicing this process you will improve your ability to recognize and change a worst event into one of the best things that ever happened in your own life. Each activity is designed to help you build this ability more quickly. Just do it!

Be Aware

Use the recommended time after reading each chapter to practice being aware of how that chapter applies to you. During the pause between chapters, I recommend you spend part of your day (while accomplishing all your other tasks) holding the chapter's point to remember in your mind. Be aware of the applications you notice as you move through your day. Take notes. If you have an old journal gathering dust, this would be the perfect time to dust it off and begin again. Notice how you begin to see and do things differently when you keep a record.

Talk to others about what you are discovering about yourself and your life. Share your insights with loved ones, friends, or trusted coworkers. By putting your awareness into words, you may challenge yourself to get clearer about what you are learning. Who knows? Maybe sharing your story will inspire those you care about to grow along with you.

Rob



***All my experiences make me
who I am now.***

—Eddie Murphy



FIND THE UPSIDE OF THE DOWNTIMES



It's a Miracle!

I WAS SHOT IN THE CENTER OF THE CHEST by an unknown assailant with a .38 caliber handgun. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

It happened very near to my home. My family was out visiting relatives, so I was bored and decided to take a walk to a nearby village shopping center. I live in a particularly charming area of Houston near Rice University and the medical center, where people are always out walking. I had done the same thing for many years without even a hint of a problem. After buying a pair of socks at the drugstore, I began to walk the eight blocks back to my house.

It was just starting to get dark. The streetlights had just come on as I walked down the left-hand side of the street in front of a small gardening shop. A car drove by slowly and turned left into the next street, stopping about thirty feet away. The driver got out kind of slowly and walked over to me. It was a normal day, just like many others. Nothing hinted at the trauma that was about to happen to me.

New Houstonians often get lost in this part of town. I'm used to helping them out. So I just thought he was another lost person asking directions. He walked up to me without saying anything. But as soon as he got close, he grabbed my left arm and told me in a cold voice, "Get in the car!" Before I knew it, two other men had jumped out of the other side of the car and were coming around toward me. That was a stressful moment.

Many things flashed through my mind during the next few seconds. I remembered that when I was eight years old my father was transferred from Texas to West Virginia, where we moved into a neighborhood in which lived ten other boys who were a year or two older than I. I had been taught not to fight with others. These boys had not received this teaching, so they beat me up regularly. I eventually had to sneak home from school so no one would catch me. Once the boys held me and let one of their sisters beat me up. It was pitiful.

Memories of being trapped and beaten and of hiding flashed through my thirty-five-year-old mind as this man grabbed me. I don't think I was dealing with the terrifying possibilities of what might happen to me. I just thought, "Wow, this hasn't happened in a long time." Frankly, I was surprised and fascinated by the intensity of the moment and with how fast my mind was going while everything around me was happening so slowly. Maybe being a psychologist makes a person think about things like this.

I stepped back reflexively, pulling my arm away. He reached behind his back and pulled out a small handgun from his belt. When I saw the gun, I thought he wanted to rob me. It never occurred to me that he would shoot. Talk about a break from reality!

It is ironic what went through my mind in this life-threatening emergency. I thought that being robbed would be OK. For many years I had been worried about not having enough money. In the next split second, I remembered some valuable ideas about money, which had made a difference for me. Three things had always been true for me: (1) I always had food to eat, usually too much; (2) I always had clothes to wear, even if they weren't the latest fashion; and (3) I always had a place to sleep, even if it was only my car. If these things are true for you, then you are like many people who have had their basic needs met, even though you may spend a lot of time worrying about not meeting them! Remembering this truth reminded me that it was OK for this person to rob me. I could always make more money.

Remember, this all happened in the few seconds that it took for the other two men to get out of the car and walk around toward us. A lot was happening very quickly in my mind while in reality this man had just grabbed me, I got out of his reach, and he pulled out his gun.

Next, a short movie went through my mind as I imagined I would say, "So, what do you want?" and he would say, "Give me your wallet." I would give him the wallet, and he would take the money.

But he didn't. I asked, "So, what do you want?" He just smiled and shot me. That wasn't a part of my movie. (Police told me later they thought this was an attempted killing, part of a gang initiation, and that if I had gotten into the car, I would surely have died.)

The bullet hit me in the center of my chest. I knew I had been shot, but I actually didn't feel anything. I saw the flame come out of the end of the gun, which was an interesting perspective. Honestly, it was quite fascinating. The flame leaped out two or three feet in many beautiful colors. It all happened so fast, and yet I noticed so many things.

MIRACLES HAPPEN!

A number of miracles happened. First, the bullet stuck in my breastbone. A .38 caliber bullet is pretty big as bullets go, so it should have shattered the bone and torn through my chest. But it didn't.

Gun barrels have tiny grooves in them that spin a bullet so that it shoots straighter. Another miracle occurred when the spinning bullet hit me and spun the fabric of my shirt around the bullet to create wadding. The wadding created a sort of bandage around the bullet so that I did not bleed. Not a drop. It didn't knock me down either. There I was, still standing with a bullet in the center of my chest. I think it scared the hell out of those three guys. When I didn't fall or bleed, they turned, ran back to their car, and drove away, as if they thought I was superman or something. I turned and walked to the first lighted house I saw.

I remember that the sprinkler system was on, and I got a little wet as I walked up and knocked on the door. A man in his thirties wearing blue surgical scrubs opened the door. I thought that was an encouraging sign. I said, "I think I've been shot," and he said, "Come in."

I guess this was another miracle. He was a heart surgeon. He worked at the trauma center of Hermann Hospital in the Texas Medical Center and had just gotten off work. Honestly!

He invited me in and had me lie down on his couch. While he was checking me out, he called the police, the ambulance, and my family. He rode with me in the ambulance to the hospital, even though he had just come home. I guess it is a bit odd, even for a heart surgeon, to have someone knock at your door with a bullet in the center of his chest.

THE MIND CAN DO AMAZING THINGS

The mind can be trained to do amazing things. For about ten years before this happened I had been practicing a process I call the Stress Management Response. I have learned to breathe deeper, relax completely, reassure myself, think positively, and smile at the humor in life. I have practiced this sequence during all the small challenges in life—what I call elementary-school lessons—like waiting at stoplights, being stuck on elevators, coping with a computer crash, being put on hold, or standing in line. Most people use such opportunities to practice being more anxious or upset. I have learned to use them to practice moving through my upset more quickly.

Get this picture. I'm riding in the ambulance. I've got a bullet in the center of my chest. I'm on the way to the emergency room. This might have seemed like an appropriate time to worry or be upset. But honestly, it didn't hurt much. It felt as if I had had the wind knocked out of me. I had felt more pain playing sandlot football as a kid.

So I focused on breathing, relaxing, reassuring myself, and thinking positively. The only thought I remember going through my mind was, "Damn, this is a good story!" It may be a hard way to get a story, but it is a true story. I realized that in a few weeks I would probably be lecturing, since I am a professional speaker,

and now I had the perfect topic. Getting shot had certainly gotten my attention, and I figured that it would get my audiences' attention too. So I started taking mental notes.

MY SIGNATURE STORY

In the public speaking profession this is known as a “signature story.” It is a story that is unique to my experience and one no other speaker can copy. A personal story like this grabs audiences in a way that nothing else does. From the point of view of my speaking career, getting shot has undoubtedly been one of the best things that ever happened to me.

Isn't it true that you also have stories that you like to tell to anyone who hasn't already heard them ten times? Isn't it also true that your best stories are about things that were extremely stressful when they were happening? So next time you are upset, worried, and stressed, remember, it's a story! Take notes! When you are ready, please contact me. I will show you how to get paid to tell your story. Your story might even end up in a follow-up book to this one with a collection of stories about how people turned their worst nightmares into the best things that ever happened to them. (Share story at stories@upsidedowntimes.com.)

WHAT TO REMEMBER:

Prepare During the Elementary-School Lessons in Life

In the meantime, remember to breathe, relax, reassure yourself, think positively, and look for the humor in life. But before you can be successful at doing this during the

graduate-school lessons of life, like getting shot, you might want to focus on the elementary-school lessons. Here are a few suggestions about how to get started.

WHAT TO DO:

Use the Pauses in Life

Think of all the moments throughout a regular day when you are forced to slow down or stop for a few moments. How do most people feel during these moments? Frustrated, impatient, annoyed, stressed? Does the stress make the post office, grocery store, or airport security line move any faster? Does it make the elevator arrive faster or the doctor invite you right in? Not really. It just makes the time feel longer.

Most people say that if they added these moments up in a typical day, the total would be anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour. Imagine if you could have an extra hour every day to relax. Actually, you do have that time! It just doesn't happen all at once. It is spread throughout the day in all these little moments.

You don't have a choice about whether these moments happen; your only choice is what you will do with that time. Nothing about the way we feel is going to make the situation change. What most of us do is literally practice being stressed.

Paul Solomon once said, "Why should I be in a miserable situation *and* be unhappy? Being in a miserable situation is bad

Why should I be in a miserable situation *and* be unhappy? Being in a miserable situation is bad enough.

enough!"¹ So instead of practicing being stressed, why don't we use the same time to relax and enjoy ourselves? Take a few deep breaths. Smile for no reason. Look for some humor in the situation. At first it may not seem to make a significant difference, but look at it this way. Throughout the day we go from one little frustrating situation to another, adding a little more stress, until by the end of the day we have built a momentum of unconscious tension, and it is difficult to get to sleep. What if instead we went from one situation to another just pausing, relaxing, breathing, and smiling? We could be releasing little bits of tension throughout the day, building positive momentum. If we can't do this during the elementary-school lessons, like waiting for the elevator, how can we do it when faced with the graduate-school lessons, like being fired, losing a loved one, or facing an illness?

So here is what to do. Make a list of all the moments during your day when you are forced to pause or stop, times when you

During the typical moments that force you to slow down and pause, most people react with frustration and impatience. Instead, use those pauses and interruptions to breathe, relax, and smile.

could practice breathing, relaxing, reassuring yourself, thinking positively, and smiling. Then decide to practice during these elementary-school lessons so that when the graduate-school lessons come—which they will—you will be ready.

Remember to take a break after each chapter. Stop now and make your list. During the pauses in

¹Paul Solomon, *The Quest* (Master's Press, 1985).

your life, practice this one step of doing the Stress Management Response for a few days. Then come back to chapter 2 and take another step.

You can hear a recording of one of my live presentations on this topic by going to the following link online:

www.resource-i.com/stress1.html



Psychologist **Dr. Rob Pennington** has been in private practice since 1980. Today he specializes in coaching executives to lead in ways others want to follow. Trained through the National Training Laboratories in organizational development and a former faculty member at three universities, Rob is able to make complex issues understandable in a delightfully commonsense manner.

The insights and wisdom he shares with individuals and organizations have been gained through extensive academic research and profound personal experience. Four-time recipient of the Mental Health Association's Outstanding Speaker Award and one of Meeting Professionals International's Platinum Presenters, Dr. Pennington has received the highest training evaluations from Fortune 100 employees consistently for twenty-nine years, often being described as "one of the best presenters I've ever heard."

More information about Dr. Pennington's history and work is available at the website listed below, along with social media contacts. If you would like to have Rob present at your next conference or convention or help improve the way your organization handles the challenges of change and conflict, you can contact him at:

Robinfo@upsidedowntimes.com
www.robertpennington.com

Twitter: drrobpennington
LinkedIn: Dr Rob Pennington
Facebook: Robert Pennington
Wordpress: drrobpennington.wordpress.com

Praise from Experts.....

"For those of us blessed to know Rob, this book is the essence of his kindness and beautiful view of life. He lives his teachings... to live life miserably or to engage life's challenge to live happily, no matter what life tosses your way!"

Doreen James Wise, RN, EdD, CEO, Medical Research Associates

"I loved the realness, openness, and vulnerability in all your stories, lessons learned and activities. I cried. I feel abundantly blessed and fortunate for the gift of your wonderful book!"

Jana Mullins, MA, author of *Open Hands: Lessons on Giving and Receiving*

"Rob does an awesome job sharing his own life experiences as learning tools for how to deal with life's unexpected challenges. His ideas are inspiring and life-changing as you integrate the information into your own life through his stories and activities."

Donna Fisher, CSP, author of *People Power, Power Networking, Professional Networking for Dummies, and Switched-On-Networking*

"People who are looking for a way to feel better about their circumstances will gather reassurance from reading Rob's book, and people who are willing to do the work to build a more enlightened way of living will find it to be a superb operator's manual."

Jim Nourse, PhD, LAC, psychologist & author of *Simple Spirituality, Finding Your Own Way*

"Rob's book is an extraordinary thing. Americans don't do serenity, especially not Americans who offer to help with business challenges. But that's what Rob does, and he shares his own biggest real-life challenges with humor and with honesty, and puts the tools in your hands while he does it. Business, life, loves, and spirit – it's all here, and I have never seen them so winningly combined."

David Berry, Psychologist and Teacher

"As Rob so openly shares his heartfelt story of struggle, compassion and resilience, we travel alongside him with both laughter and tears, learning that we, too, can transform any challenge into a gift."

Mary Elizabeth Marlow, author of *Jumping Mouse: A Story about Inner Trust*

"This gem of a book shows you how to find the sunshine after life's storms. Buy it, read it, and you'll be glad you did."

Ruben Gonzalez - Olympian, keynote speaker, and author of *The Courage to Succeed: Success Secrets of an Unlikely Three-time Olympian*

"We all can learn how to move beyond challenging life experiences. Rob shows that with an open heart we can meet with acceptance all that life brings us. The exercises at the end of each chapter of his new book make this powerful message personal to our own lives."

Suzanne E. Harrill, M.Ed. author of *The Harrill Solution: Secrets of Successful Relationships Revealed*.

"This is book is the ultimate example of the ability of a person to turn lemons into lemonade. Besides giving you his own experiences, Rob points the way for you to be able to take a second look at the 'negative' experiences that happen to you, learn from them and turn them around. And he does it all in a humorous way. Thank you, Rob for a wonderful book!"

Dr. Jerry V. Teplitz, author of *Managing Your Stress in Difficult Times: Succeeding in Times of Change and Switched-On Selling: Balance Your Brain for Sales Success*.

"Love your book. Gil Rendle says, 'New sciences talk of chaos as order not yet discovered.' I see your book as a living proof of that statement. Out of the seeming chaos of one's life your book can be a guide to aid the reader to move through life without fear. You equip the reader with an understanding that change and chaos are very possibly real world and even spiritual opportunities. People today are in need of such help. Your book provides that help to anyone wanting relevant meaning in their life journey. Bravo!"

Dr. Jerry Pennington, East District Superintendent, United Methodist Church, Texas Conference

"Dr. Pennington's experiences are real, personal, soul-searching, almost despairing at times, but never, ever – not once – did he fall – neither did he fail. This book is a "book for the times" as we all are falling prey to bad economical times, natural earthly catastrophes, and many wars on many continents all at the same time. Rob's life "storms" are stories of courage, faith and miracles. You will be inspired to look up and see the sun and not the clouds and as Henry Ford said, character is built by setbacks and grief that keep us moving forward. This is an important and vital book for this generation and beyond."

Julia Carroll, Author, NU-REIKI ONENESS

"I enjoyed this book tremendously. It grabbed me from the first chapter and got me to think in ways that have changed my life for the better. We all have different sides of life that we have to deal with, whether having a illness, being a caregiver, or a spouse or corporate employee. Your book touches others in all these areas because you share so many different sides of yourself. I know your book will be a great help to a lot of people. My husband's got to read this."

Paul Joiner, Editor of the MS Lone Star Classifieds

