

Understanding the Clouds in your life

"Into each life a little rain must fall"

--Longfellow

For some reason, as human beings, we seem to want every day to be sunny, each night to be cloudless, and each "tomorrow" to be filled with hope and promise.

But just as Longfellow wrote, sometimes the rain must fall -- sometimes difficult times will come upon us, sometimes life will have its challenges, sometimes joy will be hard to come by.

In other words, sometimes clouds will fill the skies of our lives.

Not every day will be sunny and bright -- not every night will be warm and inviting. Cold days will come, winter brings with it long patches of cloudy days and stormy nights.

As in the weather, not every day will be fabulous and easy. Many will be difficult and challenging.

As I've confronted the demons in my own life over the years, I've soon learned that it's the sorrow and challenge in our lives that helps us to understand and value the joyful days. Without the storm, do we really understand the value of the sunny day? Without the clouds, would we really value the blue, sunny sky?

It is the challenges in our lives that define and refine us. The challenges make us grown, make us learn, make us change. Like fine-grit sandpaper, they sand off the rough spots, and polish us up to a fine shine.

It is the clouds in our lives that highlight the great times -- it is the downturn that makes the upturn seem all more special. We learn soon to gain wisdom from our experiences, to gain understanding from our challenges, to gain empathy from our sorrow. We become a greater person because of the difficult times that find their way into our life.

Now, just as a person can't live happily on a diet of cloudy days, in our lives, we

cannot deal well with a constant supply of nothing but trouble -- but that doesn't mean we should reject the challenges -- we must learn from them, grow from them, see their beauties, learn their worth.

The difficult times we go through, and how we react with those difficult times, more than anything else will define the kind of person we become.

As a sometime outdoor photographer, I have long learned that a beautiful scene with a clear blue sky is never as pretty as that same scene with a mix of clouds. The clouds in the sky bring contrast to the scene. They provide depth and definition. They add beauty and reflectance. The clouds in the picture add to the beauty of the scene -- and the clouds in our lives, no matter how challenging they may be at the time, help us see the beauty, definition, depth, and joy in our lives.

Let's look at more from that Longfellow quote:

**"Be still sad heart and cease repining;
Behind the clouds the sun is shining,
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life a little rain must fall"**

Let's see the beauty of our lives, clouds and all.