

Power Affirmations

Part 7: "This Challenge Will Make Me Stronger"

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Good timber doesn't grow with ease, the stronger the wind, the stronger the trees." "Calm seas make bad sailors." "That which does not kill you makes you stronger."

Chances are, you've heard one or two of these quotes before. Perhaps you've even used one of them when talking to a friend or student who is going through hard times. As a matter of fact, I find it pretty easy to give advice to people who are struggling. I may phrase it a little nicer than this, but what I basically mean to tell them is, "Suck it up. Quit whining. You'll get through it. And you'll be better for it."

What I find challenging is applying this concept to my own life. Somehow, it's different when I'm the one going through the challenge. Thus, the creation of the mastery mindset, "This Challenge Will Make Me Stronger."

Chances are, when you look at past challenges you have faced, you can see how you benefited from them; how these challenges helped to shape you into the person you are currently. As a matter of fact, you are probably even thankful for some of your most difficult challenges because of all the blessings they ended up bestowing upon you. It may not have seemed like the best thing at the time, but in hindsight, you're glad it happened. I can think of so many instances in my life where this is true, but I'd like to share one story with you.

I grew up in a dojo. My first job was teaching karate. I opened up my own school six months out of high school. Life was good. After a few years, I decided to get serious about my business. I borrowed money from family and moved to a bigger, more expensive location.

Things became challenging for me very quickly. The extra pressure was taking its toll on me and I started to doubt my choice of vocations. Then, one day during a particularly challenging month, a gentleman came in off the street and offered to buy my school from me. Without thinking twice

about it, I sold the school. But instead of taking the money and paying off all of my debts, I did something "incredibly brilliant." I bought a Porsche!

The car broke down shortly after the purchase and I sold it for next to nothing. All of a sudden, I found myself without my school, but with all the debt that I incurred along the way. Although I still taught in the evenings, I made my living painting low-income apartments.

It didn't take me too long to realize how many poor choices I had made. It took me almost four years until I was in a financial position to reopen my school on a full-time basis. During those years, there wasn't one day that I didn't want to kick myself for being so stupid. How could I have sold my school on such short notice? Why didn't I pay off my debts instead of buying a car?

Looking back on it, however, I could not be more thankful for the experience. I wouldn't trade it for anything! I learned the value of keeping your debt low. I learned the importance of having good credit. I have a real appreciation and respect for how hard it is to have a "real job."

But most importantly, this experience helped me to realize how lucky I am to make my living doing something I love. Sure, there are plenty of challenges that go along with my profession, but every time I start to second-guess what I do, I reflect on the alternative. I only have to remember walking up three flights of stairs carrying two five-gallon buckets of paint into a cockroach-infested apartment in 100-degree weather to do sheetrock repair. Very quickly, instead of feeling sorry for myself, I start feeling extremely grateful.

"This Challenge Will Make Me Stronger" is an excellent affirmation to use when you have to navigate rough waters. It reminds us of the importance of optimism and resiliency, and it can help you keep your perspective and stay focused on solutions. I challenge you to put this strategy to work in your life.