



Exhortation

The Free Filling Station to reFuel your Encouragement Tank

Equipping. Enriching. Empowering. Encouraging. Energizing . . . Exhorting People to Greatness

October 2006

Ever Ready?

The will to win is not nearly as important as the will to prepare to win. Everyone wants to win, but not everyone wants to prepare to win. Preparing to win is where the determination that you will win, is made. Once the game or test or project is underway, it is too late to prepare to win. The actual game, test or project is just the end of a long process of getting ready, in which the outcome was really determined. So if you want to win, you must want to prepare to win. Once you prepare to win, winning is almost anti climatic.

- Edward W. Smith



To varying degrees, the desire to win is in everyone, and even in every animal. For sure, no one was born a loser, regardless of the level of affluence and differences in environment, but rather people would feel like losers because, in retrospect, they were not prepared when the opportunity to win presented itself.

Basically, people often expect to reap a harvest where they have not sown, pluck a flower which they have not watered, have a blissful marriage and well-behaved children when they have not invested the time to make it happen, be debt-free when they have not being financially prudent, maintain a desirable body weight when they have not being mindful of their eating habits, and expect miracles from the God that they often ignore.

We want something without willing to give up anything; managers want more productivity from their employees whom they rarely encourage; societies desire more responsible youths, but yet continue to legalize every concept that contradicts morals and values. Coach Joe Paterno, whose ever-readiness brought his team over 300 football victories often stressed that **while the will to win is important, the will to prepare is vital**. So to make things happen, my friend, you must be [Ever Ready](#) when opportunities to make things happen present themselves.

This is why we exhort you this month to be [Ever Ready](#) for the imminent challenges in life – so you may be able to effectively deal with them as they unfold, for **what people call luck is actually where preparation meets opportunity**. Someone once said: "Sitting still and wishing makes no person great; the good Lord sends the fish, but you must dig the bait". My friend, by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. Despite Apostle Peter's advice to always prepare our minds for action, many people still find their lives empty because they are never ready when opportunities rain. If you desire self-improvement, ask yourself how ready you are to receive feedback from those

around you. If you desire excellent grades in school or in performance reviews, ask yourself how prepared you have been throughout the year to now expect success. If you wish to effectively handle challenges in your marriage, parenting, and relationships, then ask yourself if you have prepared yourself for the known challenges in these areas of compromising, leading and coexisting. It is not that we really struggle with being [Ever Ready](#), considering the thorough preparations we make for our parties, anniversaries and vacations, but rather we struggle with putting [First Things First](#). On this note, I recommend Stephen Covey's book titled, "**First Things First**", which was instrumental in helping me develop the habit of doing just that.

In the words of Howard Ruff, "It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark." And since Noah did not build the ark alone, I have formed a support group for myself, made up of some respectable men and women with courage, strong moral convictions and integrity. These are friends who are Ever Ready to spur me on rightfully, and I have exposed my life to them so they may better help me develop and consistently enhance my strategies to deal with personal struggles – through advice, encouragement, rebuke and prayers. **If you do not have friends like these, it is likely because you have not being a friend like this to someone else.**

According to Aristotle, "A friend is an aid to the young, to guard them from error; to the elderly, to attend to their wants and to supplement their failing power of action; to those in the prime of life, to assist them to noble deeds". If you haven't already, then use the criteria mentioned above to build a support group for yourself – or to review the "support group" you currently have, for in the words of Apostle Paul, "Don't be fooled! Bad company corrupts good character".



Popularly known as Dr. Phil, Dr Phillip McGraw, in his book titled, [Life Strategies](#), asserts that those who really have no strategies in life, but rather just reactively going from day to day, taking what comes, are simply not competitive. According to him, "**There are 'a lot of dogs after the bone' out there, and just stumbling along is no way to succeed. The winners in this life know the rules of the game and have a plan, so that their efficiency is comparatively exponential to that of people who don't.** No big mystery, just fact." Statistics have attributed almost half of the astronomical divorce rate in our societies today to the lack of couples being well prepared for marital challenges before exchanging vows. They have the will to win, but NOT the will to prepare to win. So my friend, while I absolutely agree with you that we could never be ready for everything that life will toss your way, I also strongly agree that we can be ready for some of the imminent challenges in the areas that matter most to you, by reading *applicable* books, attending *applicable* seminars and workshops, etc. It is not whether you arrived that matters but rather how you arrived. Basically, how many fellow drivers did you swear at in order to arrive *early*? How many (beloved) lives, voicemails, emails, and advices do you ignore everyday just to make sure you get what you need? **Contrary to what some of us learnt while growing up, it is NOT how far, but how well.**



Therefore, I exhort you to write down your goals as well as the corresponding, possible challenges you may encounter, and then pursue the required wisdom, knowledge and understanding before the opportunities to win, often called challenges, unfold. If you desire career advancement, ensure that your certifications are periodically upgraded, and your resume updated. An accurate measure of your readiness is whether it would take you more than 24 hours to submit your application for a job. If you have children, get them [Ever Ready](#) for bullies and peer pressures, while ensuring you have education savings, life insurance and a will, for when you are no more. Come to think of it, many of us do not have to spend enormous time like Noah building an ark that is 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high in preparation for a heavy flood, but yet are barely prepared for our monthly bills, our yearly taxes, disobediences of our children, bumps with our spouses, yearend reviews,

and redundancy. We allow our upbringing, laziness and pride to restrain us from seeking advice, reading applicable self-help books, and committing challenging matters to our Creator, and yet are frustrated when unable to be victorious in our challenges. You must realize that those who are never ready to effectively deal with challenges in their marriage, parenting, relationships, career, business, finances, health and spirituality often die with additional discomfort and pain due to their baggage of regrets. Hey, like Teddy Roosevelt once said, **"Nine-tenths of wisdom consists in being wise in time"**.



"So put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." (Apostle Paul)

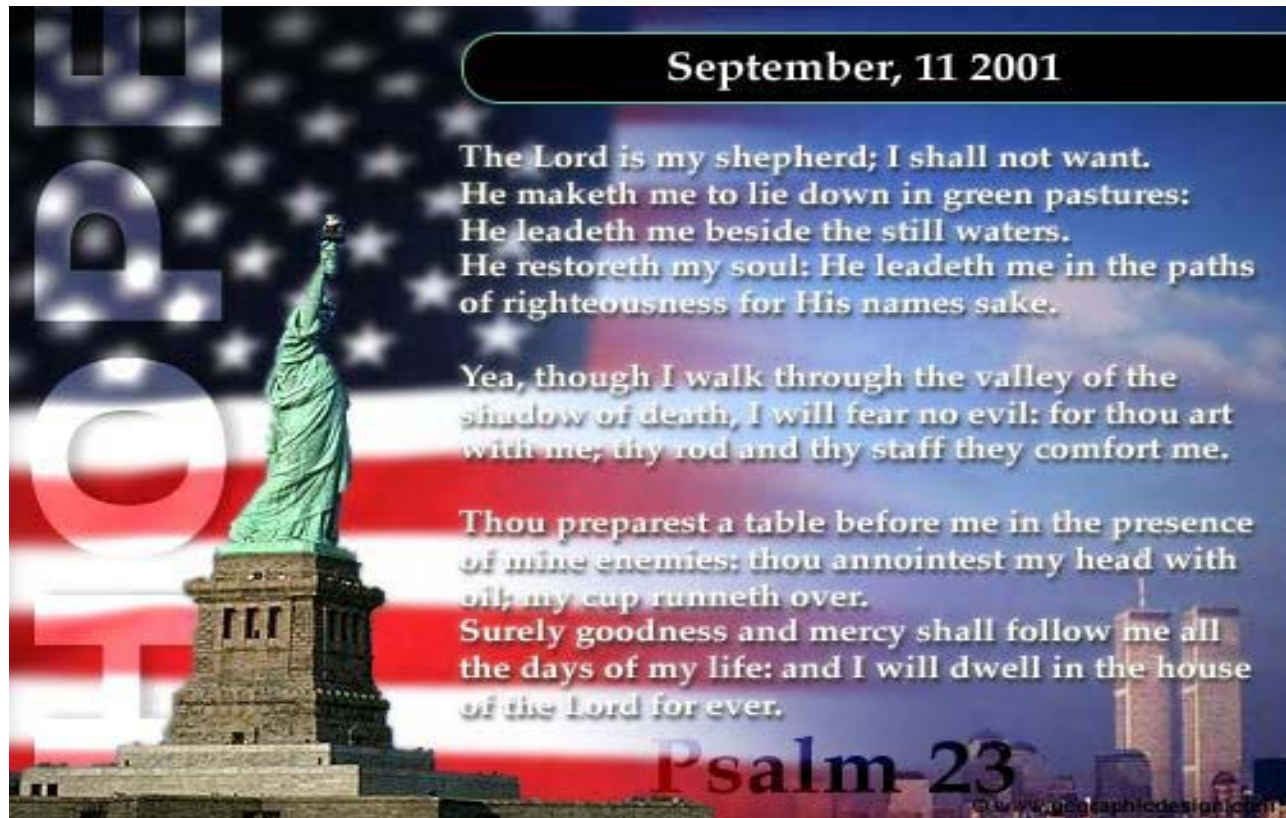
The truth is that we may never live long enough to experience another world war. We may never even experience another crash in the stock market. Despite the odds, we may never even experience another large-scale terrorist attacks like the world saw on September 11, 2000, or another magnitude 9.0 Tsunami like the world saw in December 2004. But we will, for sure, experience death someday. And this, my friend, we must be [Ever Ready](#) for because neither the homeland security agencies nor the business continuity plans can prevent it when our time to go back to our Maker finally comes. Like some of you, **I would rather live my life inline with God's words of loving my neighbour as myself, and then die to find that he doesn't exist, like some of you claim, than live contrary to His words by thinking of myself only, and then die to find Him welcoming ONLY His servants into everlasting peace. Therefore, to die a winner, we must consistently seek the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** We must be subject and obedient to rulers and authorities, ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward everyone. We must avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about anything, because these are unprofitable and useless, nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, for we must all give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. My friend, to be [Ever Ready](#) to meet our Creator, we must devote ourselves to doing what is good, in order that we may provide for our daily necessities and not live unproductive lives. If it is possible, as far as it depends on us, we must live at peace with everyone. This is being [Ever Ready](#) to win – to die without regrets!



Personally, I will continue making every effort to ensure that I am [Ever Ready](#) to instantaneously exit this world with the same mindset of Apostle Paul, who, in his last days, said; "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,

and I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed (and [Ever Ready](#)) for his appearing”. My friend, remember this: **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.** My prayer is for you to really take charge of your own life and relentlessly pursue the wisdom, understanding and knowledge to make you [Ever Ready](#) for the opportunities to win in life. May your life matter! May it be productive! And may it make a VERY POSITIVE IMPACT in the lives of those around you – now and forevermore. Amen.

Now go get yourself EVER READY, for the war with Satan rages on.



The Exhortation World Outreach is a non-profit organization that is focused on helping people and organizations recognize, appreciate and invest their strengths and talents; as well as acknowledge, control and work-on their weaknesses and opportunities, so that they may consistently CHANGE, GROW and BLOSSOM. Operating out of Toronto, Canada, The Exhortation World Outreach was founded by Alex Nosa Ihama, who is a freelance writer, motivational/inspirational speaker, and a Consultant and Coach in Life Matters, Business, Leadership and Personal Effectiveness. Alex **dispenses knowledge and encouragement worldwide** through his website, www.TheExhortation.com, public events and Personal Effectiveness workshops, while serving at **The Exhortation World Outreach** together with his Running Wife, Stephanie, a certified Fitness Coach in Canada and USA who currently train and motivate marathoners and long distance runners.

Alex developed the Personality Dashboard®, which is a tool used to accurately discover and measure personality Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.), while providing physical and remote one-on-one coaching sessions to a diverse group of people around the world, in order to enhance their personal effectiveness, marriage, parenting, relationships, career, businesses, finances and spirituality. He also facilitates quarterly Marriage Enrichment Forums, quarterly Parenting Enrichment forums, the annual Mighty Men Convention, as well as other events aimed at EQUIPPING, ENRICHING, EMPOWERING, ENCOURAGING, ENERGIZING and EXHORTING people to GREATNESS.

For more information about Alex and Stephanie, **The Exhortation World Outreach**, or to start receiving your free REGULAR dose of KNOWLEDGE and ENCOURAGEMENT, please visit www.TheExhortation.com or REGISTER now by sending an email directly to alex.ihama@TheExhortation.com.

Copyright © 2006 by The Exhortation World Outreach. All Rights Reserved.