

Why do bad things happen to good people?

By Doug Anderson. Copyright 2010.

Why do bad things happen to good people? I have been asked this question many times and I have at some point, found myself asking the same question. Stop the bus right there and let's take a look at the question. Just because you do not understand the situation, doesn't make it "bad". I appreciate that some situations are horrific at that specific point in time, but for the purposes of answering this question holistically, then we need to consider the situation holistically and not in part. The trick is not to waste time questioning why but to rather do. Haven't you ever had something "bad" happen to you or around you at some point and then sometime down the line, that particular set of circumstances made perfect sense?

The Bible says "as a man thinks, so is he". The Bible also says that we must "renew our minds daily" ...why? Because "as a man thinks, so is he". The Bible further says "as you sow, you reap". What you put in, you will get out. We have all grown up hearing phrases like "karma will come back and bite you", "the wheel turns" and so on. Where do you think they come from? These are some basic UNIVERSAL LAWS that I have witnessed in action and strongly believe in. Whether you are religious or not, these laws are universal and you can't escape them – like gravity, whether you like it or not, it is there.

So getting back to the original question of; "why do bad things happen to good people?" I want to say this; the good news is that the "bad" news can become the good news, if you change the way you think. Change the way you think, change the negative to a positive and watch how the "good plan" unfolds before you – and it will!

Take my life story as an example. When I was born, Dr's said to my parents that I had a 98% chance of dying at birth. They further said that should I live, I wouldn't have a quality of life and I wouldn't be educated. The Dr's believed in their prognosis so much they said that I wouldn't live past 48hrs. The Dr's further advised my parents to wait a few days before performing all the necessary surgery needed to keep me alive.

The Dr's were wrong! I went from strength to strength as the hours ticked on. After 48hrs the same Dr's changed their story and advised that they would do the surgery. Over 30 years later, 37 operations later and an incredible life so far, I am sharing my story with you.

So what is the point to all this? The good news is that the bad news can become good news, if you change the way you think. The Dr's believed I had a 98% chance of dying at birth – my parents believed I had a 2% chance of surviving. Clearly a 2% chance is all I needed.

So I was born with a disability – is that fair to me or my family? Many would say no.

My disability came with many complications and challenges requiring 37 operations to date – is that fair on me and my family? Many would say no.

I was expelled from the first mainstream school that I attended in Grd.1 and the basis for which the school expelled me was because I had a disability – was this fair to me and my family? I think all would agree, no.

Growing up I was teased and ridiculed because of my disability and couldn't really experience growing up as my other able bodied friends did – was this fair to me? At that time, I certainly didn't think so.

I have been denied many jobs because I have a disability. I recall one company wanting me to join them based on my credentials, communicating this with me via e-mail and telephone and yet when I pitched up at the company, the CEO called me in and said, "We didn't expect someone with a disability and we are therefore no longer interested in acquiring your services". Fair?

I could go on but I think you get the picture. So the "bad" circumstances all seemed to revolve around one thing – my disability. Interestingly my parents taught me not to dwell on the negative and to rather move on and seek other opportunities, because they are there and they are plentiful.

So, over 30 years later, this is how I will respond to the opening question and hopefully it will answer it for you. As much as there were "bad" circumstances or situations that arose out of me having a disability, there were even more good circumstances and situations that came about as a result of it. Let me explain:

Because I couldn't walk, I crawled for many years and as a result, I was always close to the ground, close to Mother Nature and all her beauty and developed this intense fascination for "creepy-crawlies", bugs and all things that mothers wished their kids didn't have a fascination in.

As a result of my fascination for nature, I belonged to a particular nature club. The Chairman of that club (Dr Filmer) was a Homoeopath and really the inspiration for me studying in the Allied Health Professions. His son (Robbie) was blind and had kidney failure. I had a good relationship with the Filmer's growing up.

Thankfully I was expelled from the first mainstream school I attended because the then Department of Education forced my parents to place me in a school that catered for children with disabilities (Hope School). It was at Hope School that I was exposed to sports for people with disabilities. I went on to represent my province (Southern Transvaal / Central Gauteng) from 1989 – 1997 when I retired from competitive sport. I won 39 Gold Medals, 16 Silver Medals and 5 Bronze medals in that time. I was also fortunate enough to win Sportsman Of The Year, MVP (Most Valuable Player), Best Wheelchair Athlete and Victor Ludorum of the National Championships in that time.

I always wanted to represent my country in sport growing up and finally in Matric (1996) I was chosen to represent South Africa at the World Wheelchair Games in Stoke Mandeville, UK. I would never have had this opportunity if I continued to be schooled at that mainstream school.

After studying and qualifying in the Allied Health Professions and being denied job after job because I had a disability, the only job that I could get was as a call centre agent. It was at work, after being there a week, that a colleague said to me that I had a nice voice and I should try get onto Radio or TV.

That same day, I read an ad in the newspaper that was offering a course in Radio Presenting. There were several selection processes I had to go through, but I was fortunately one of 12 people that were selected to do the course.

Shortly after completing the Radio Presenting course, I met up with Robbie Filmer (at his father's funeral) and I mentioned to him that I had just completed this Radio Presenting course. Robbie was approached to present a disability talk-show almost a year earlier, but he unfortunately had to turn it down due to health complications. Robbie encouraged me to give the Radio Station a call and see if they were still interested. I did and they were still interested. It was exactly a year to the day from when Robbie was asked to do a disability show, that I presented the first show of Ready, Willing and Able. And so began what has been an incredible journey for me, in the media.

Interestingly, it is on Radio and TV where I have been able to give back and Make A Difference in the lives of many people with disabilities around South Africa. I have even won awards for the work I have done in the field of disability.

I want to highlight at this point, that none of this would have been possible, if I hadn't had a disability, so at the time of my birth it might have been thought of as something "bad" but I think, 30 years down the line that it was actually the right thing. It isn't my place to question but to rather embrace it and live it.

I am so glad that those companies turned me down because I had a disability. It is because of that, that I am able to be writing this.

The good news is that the bad news can become good news, IF YOU CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK.

Don't focus on the negative, focus on the positive, move forward and let the incredible plan specifically designed for you unfold before you.