Education Support

American Dance

Shake it Off and Step Up!

This parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule.

The mule fell into the farmer's well. The water wasn't very deep, so the mule could stand on the bottom. The farmer heard the mule praying-or whatever mules do when they fall into wells.

After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical. But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back he should shake it off and step up. This he did, blow after blow of dirt hitting his back. "Shake it off and step up... shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up" repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or how distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought panic and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up. It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of the well.

What seemed like it would bury him actually helped him, all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity. That's life. If we face our problems and respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity...the adversities that come along to bury us usually have within them the very real potential to benefit us. Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the Ark. Professionals built the Titanic.