



It goes without saying that 2020 has been a year that has tested our individual character. These consequential times have made us think in new ways, overcome unimaginable challenges, and adapt to the changing world as we know it today. However, I've always believed that the world's biggest challenges can lead to our greatest opportunities.

We have the power to determine whether we get up when life throws a thunderbolt at us – or whether we back down. And in order to rise, we need courage.

People often ask where my courage comes from. First and foremost, it's from my mother, Kathleen McDermott, who was a relentless optimist. Everything I am, was, and ever will be – I owe it all to her. She gave me the permission to dream big and reminded me that the best part of you is you.

There have also been personal moments throughout my life that left me with valuable lessons. These learnings still resonate with me today and it is my hope that they'll also inspire you to achieve your own Winners Dream no matter what obstacle is thrown your way.

Have the courage to overcome:

The most important things in our lives aren't objects or possessions; they are people and love. When I was 12, our house caught fire. Thankfully, my family got out safely. Even though my parents had worked incredibly hard to fix up and buy that house, their focus that night wasn't the damage or the loss of the structure – it was overwhelming gratitude for our safety.

I think courage is the ability to look at a terrible situation and not feel defeated. Courage inspires us to find a way forward. Life requires sacrifice...I don't know anyone who hasn't been faced with tough choices and doubt. But it's in those moments when I've learned to appreciate and thank the loved ones in my life. People are the most important purpose any of us have and being significant in someone else's life is pure joy.

Do what others are unwilling or unable to do:

Trust is the ultimate human currency. Showing others that you care about them will always be the differentiator.

I learned this running a deli on Long Island. I got to know my customers. Seeing them differently made me do things differently. I wasn't just a hard worker; I did everything I could to build that deli into the best place in the neighborhood.

My deli delivered to the senior citizens' home down the street. I extended credit to my working-class customers. I welcomed teenagers into the shop and installed video games. While other stores saw their customers as a way to make a buck, I saw them as people.

You earn trust in drops and lose it in buckets. It's the human element that makes people feel connected, special, and keeps them coming back.

Will finds a way:

Your thunderbolt will come. Mine did in 2015. A fall down a flight of stairs led to the loss of an eye.

Lying on those stairs, my mind told me to go to sleep, that I had done enough. My will reminded me that I had a beautiful family, good friends, and a job that I loved. I knew I had to find a way to get up, get out, and get on with it.

With this life-changing event, I learned that vision isn't just what you see. It's how you feel and how you make others feel. And even through the most life-changing experiences, will always finds a way.

I'm fired up for 2021! Keep the faith. Protect your dreams. And like my mother told me, always remember the best part of you is you!

Bill McDermott
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