

Telling Tales: Stronger

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By BECKY ANDREWS

Many times in life adults will look in the mirror, throw their hands up and whisper -- or scream -- "that's it, I can't take anymore. I give up!" This is usually in response to a situation life has thrown and for one reason or another, you feel overwhelmed and just want to fall on the ground, assume the fetal position and maybe even suck your thumb. (At least that's what some people do. I prefer dive head first into a big piece of chocolate cake.)

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Whether you're single, married, divorced or have a significant other, you have probably faced trials in the relationship. Sometimes the problems are trivial, like having an argument over

leaving the toilet seat up. Others, like the death of a loved one, seem to put even the strongest relationship in crisis.

It's those major life changing events that, while painful and seemingly impossible to live through, create strength you never knew you had. Something else happens, too. We become more sympathetic.

If you have been on the receiving end of a tragic event, the first thing you may search for is likeness. Someone to relate to, someone who says those three little words that makes the pain a little more bearable... "I've been there." And often just seeing one person make it through a crisis creates a deep sense of appreciation for what you have. It also forces us to stop arguing over the little things, like arguing over a toilet seat.

While we are only four months into 2010, I have observed some of the most amazing testimonies of strength this year. I have seen a couple lose a child and carry on. They may carry on with tears but, those tears serve as emotional cleansing that allows a broken heart to mend. I have watched a woman rise from the ashes of a bitter divorce to find that there is life after betrayal and forgiveness opens the gateway to find new love. I have witnessed a friend lose her mother and reluctantly become part of the sandwich generation as she worries about how she can care for her aging father while not neglecting her own family. And over the years I have watched as my little family weathers the storms of life only to come out standing proud and tall (OK, maybe not "tall" but with very good posture) next to a rainbow.

Sometimes we don't know our own strength. Sometimes we can't imagine life getting any harder. But it can and it will. The most important thing to remember is out of the most unbearable situation appears a fierce will. It's that "will" that can help you find the courage to take another step and the compassion to one day help a friend find theirs.

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