

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN - BOOK REVIEW

By Joshua Ng Ho Man

16-9-2006

The book (When Bad Things Happen) is written by Ted O'Neal and illustrated by R.W Alley. It is a children's guidebook to help kids cope when bad things happen to them. It is also a guidebook for children to help others when something bad happen to someone you know.

Introduction

I find this book very interesting and helpful because it teaches us about how to cope when bad things happen to us or to our friends, and how we can learn to cope or how we can help others who are less fortunate than us to cope.

Good Times, Bad Times

In the beginning of this book, there was one paragraph that struck me. It says sunshine is part of life - and so are thunderstorms. There are good times and bad times. And the bad times may not even be anybody's fault. I've learnt that in life there will always be happy moments and there will always be sad moments. When sad moments do happen, I always try to think of happy things and remind myself that after the rain, there will always be a rainbow.

However You Feel Is Okay

In the second chapter, the book tells us that when something very bad happens, you might want to cry or yell or run away and hide. You might have stomachaches or nightmares. You might even feel confused, scared, tired, sick, bored, guilty, angry, lonely, sad, ashamed or worried. All these feelings are normal. And we don't need to be ashamed or afraid of them. We should talk about our feelings with someone close to us. In other words, I have learnt that it is better to feel angry or feel sad when bad things happen, rather than not feel anything at all. It is not healthy to bottle up all your feelings and emotions. You should cry if you feel like crying, it is also good to

talk to someone and after that you might feel better. But of course, we also have to learn to be strong when bad things happen to us.

"Why"?

Many times when a bad thing happens to someone, one will be tempted to ask why that bad thing has to happen to him or her, e.g. why Grandma got sick, why you have to move so far away from friends. We can ask our mom or dad to help us to understand. We have to understand that sometimes bad things happen and there isn't any good reason. It isn't anybody's fault.

Help Yourself

When bad things happen to you, help yourself by not letting your worry, anger, or sadness be a secret. Make sure grown up know how you feel, so they can help you. For myself, I would talk to my mom or dad about my feelings. It is good to know that you are safe and loved and will always be cared for.

Help Others

In this chapter, the book says that each of us has special gifts to help us bring kindness to the world. When bad things happen to your friends or someone you know, we should show our love, care and kindness towards them. We can help them and make them feel better or help them to overcome their fears or anger by maybe writing a letter to that person, or sending a card to that person, or visit or talk to that person. We may not be able to put things "together again" either, but we should do what we can to help, even if it's something very small. Just trying will make you feel better.

God's Plan

Sometimes we even ask God why bad things happen to us. But from the book, I have learnt that God has a big plan for the whole universe, even though we do not understand it. We know God loves us and cares for us. And God is always there, no matter what happens. God sometimes helps us through the hands and hugs of other people.

Being Brave

When bad things happen, we have to be brave and strong to face the problem. It is all right to feel scared or afraid, but you have to be strong and brave to

face the situation, and still do what you need to do. Sometimes it might be hard for you to keep your mind on your school work when you are facing a crisis, but that is what you need to do, that is how you can be brave and life has to go on.

Be Yourself

When things are not just like they were before, for example your grand parent had just passed away or you have lost your loved one, you can still play with your friends, play with your favourite games and you can still read a book that you love to make you feel better. You can enjoy and still be thankful for all the other things that are good in your life and stay positive.

Do Something New

It's good to try new and different things. This will help to take your mind off your troubles for a while. For example, go out with a friend, go shopping with your mum, read a funny and interesting book or learn a new musical instrument, maybe you could even go to a new park or to a playground. Notice the flowers and rocks in the creek. It's a beautiful, wonderful world we live in, after all!

Remember The Heroes

The people we call " heroes" know that life is hard sometimes and you can't do anything about it, and bad times do not last forever. Heroes will never give up and they will work together as a team to save other people. Ordinary people can also be heroes, when they are strong, loving, and forgiving. I think my parents are heroes, because they have all the qualities of being a hero, they are strong, forgiving and loving.

Try To Forgive

Forgiving means we try to understand and let go of hurt and anger. For example, when someone steps on your foot accidentally while you are entering the train. Despite that he did not apologise, you still try to forgive him. If no one ever forgave, then everyone would be hitting each other back all the time and the hitting will go on and on, and the world will be very chaotic.

Do Good

The best thing to do when bad things happen is to do good things. Faith means believing in God. Hope means trusting that life will get better. Love means treating other people the way you want people to treat you. The best thing to do when something bad happens is to pour more good into the world. Practice faith, hope and love!

Really Bad Things

When really bad things happen in the world, for example, floods, hurricanes, tsunami, earthquakes or war, and you get worried, tell your parents or teachers. You can talk to them and tell them how you feel and what to do everyday to stay safe and well. Praying to God will help to calm your fears also.

Life Changes

Lots of things in life can change, but some things never do. God will always love us. Our family will always love us. They will always take care of us. Love is what our world needs all the time - when things are good, when things are bad, and when things are in-between. I think the world needs a lot of love, so that there will be no more war, or terrorist attacks!

I am very fortunate that I have never experienced anything that is too sad or traumatic for me to handle. I find this book very useful for children, even for adults as it teaches us how to cope when bad things happen to us. I like this book and I recommend it to all children and adults especially those who have faced difficult situations before. This book may seem very simple to read but it has a lot we can learn from it. With this book, we can begin to calm our fears, ease our sadness, and help us heal. This book teaches us to be strong and I learn that in life, there will always be good times and bad times. When bad times do come, we should be strong and hang in there!