

Do your terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days just seem to be multiplying

I went to sleep with gum in my mouth, and now there's gum in my hair, and when I got out of bed this morning I tripped on the skateboard and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running, and I could tell that it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.~ Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst.

This wonderful book was written for children. But ultimately, its theme can apply to anyone of any age. In it, the primary character, Alexander, rants about the incredibly bad day he's having. The author shows us that he's not just a victim of bad luck; he is also creating some of the chaos plaguing him.

Viorst attempts to evoke empathy and teach children to commiserate with those around them, yet she does not attempt to preach or teach a lesson. In the end, when Alexander's mother tucks him into bed on the night of the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, she tells him, 'Some days are just like that.'

I have recently learned that sometimes terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days tend to clump together. They seem to multiply, so upon revis-

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ways in which I might have brought these terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days upon myself; but just as Alexander sometimes exaggerates his bad luck and sometimes imagines it, (he is completely unreasonable when he complains about having to sit in the middle seat in the carpool or that his teacher didn't appreciate his picture of an invisible castle which is in actuality his creative way of saying that he handed in a blank sheet of paper), I discovered that for the most part, things happen and we can't always fix them. We must do the best we can and just get on with it.

My resolve to pick myself up, brush myself off, and go on was repeatedly tested this past week.

Two fairly major underlying personal issues have been demanding my attention for a while now. One is physical, and the other is a very emotional and stressful issue concerning



ANNE CARMICHAEL

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the end of life of a loved one. Both have distracted from my normal life, so when little day-to-day mishaps came along, it felt as though the weight of the world had dropped onto my shoulders.

As I prepared to make yet another trip to the hospital to check on my loved one, I was showered, dressed, and had taken care of everything at home to free me up for the day. I got into the car, turned the key, and my 17-year-old car said, 'Not today, honey. Go back inside and cool your jets.' My grandson took time out of his busy workday to check it out, and a day or two later, I was back on the road with a new battery and a lighter bank account.

Toward the end of the week, I was preparing to fulfill my voluntary and happy obligation to meet

my great-granddaughter's school bus and sit with her until her mother got home from work. I always bring her a special treat after school, and that day I chose her favorite: pumpkin pie.

I loaded the pie and a can of spray whipped topping into the car, and with the new battery, it immediately came to life. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and since the convertible top had been down before the dead-battery incident, I left it down and headed out on a country road to enjoy the drive and avoid traffic.

I was about 8 miles from home when the wind suddenly picked up, and storm clouds rolled in. No problem. All convertible owners have had to pull over to close the top at some point because of rain, and I did just that. But when I started the

close sequence, nothing happened. The rain was just a sprinkle at that point, so I wasn't panicked. I tried the close button several more times. Nothing. I had been to pick up groceries earlier and thought perhaps the attendant hadn't closed the trunk completely, so I did that. Nothing. There's a child safety lock on my window controls, so I tried that. Nothing. I made sure all the doors were closed and that the gears were in park—still nothing. I called my grandson to ask if the battery exchange might have tripped the electric sensor for the top. Negative.

It was raining harder now, so as a last resort, I called upon the Higher Power to please stop the rain long enough for me to get home and put the car back in the garage.

The sun came out within seconds, and I called my son to ask him to pick up my great-grand, and I made it home safe and dry in minutes. (Update: When I relayed the incident to my daughter, she encouraged me to try closing the top one more time. Some divine inspiration told me to try rolling the windows up, and when I did, the top went up too.)

Perseverance and a positive, never-say-die attitude got me through my terrible, horrible, no good, very bad week.

Throughout the book, Alexander threatens to chuck it all and move to Australia. While I'm certain Australia is a lovely place to live, I'm also fairly certain its inhabitants have terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days.

So when one of 'those' days makes you want to throw up your hands and move to Australia, or when someone you care about begins a long, tedious, and detailed dialogue about theirs, remember, 'some days are just like that.' The best you can do is listen to your friend, put your own terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days behind you, and hope tomorrow is better.

Have a pleasant, wonderful, very good week, everyone!



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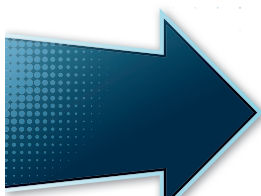
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