

Adversity

A farmer owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer discovered the mule 'braying' -- or whatever mules do once they fall into wells. After cautiously assessing the state of affairs, the farmer felt sorry for the mule, but resolved that neither the mule nor the well was worth saving. Rather, he called his neighbors together and told them what had occurred and asked them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

At the start, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors proceeded shoveling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. It all of a sudden dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back: he had better shake it off and step up! This is what the old mule did, blow after blow. "Shake it off and step up... shake it off and step up... shake it off and step up!" he repeated to encourage himself.

Regardless how painful the blows, or distressing the state of affairs appeared, the old mule fought "panic" and simply kept right on shaking it off and stepping up! You guessed it! It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well! What appeared like it would bury him, actually end up blessing him. All because of the manner in which he handled his hardship.