

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

A problem's not a problem until you make it one, says DEBORAH STORER

Feel like you are immersed in your problems all the time? Wish life was easier?

If you watched *60 Minutes* a few weeks ago, you would have seen an inspiring man named Nick Vujicic.

What made this story so remarkable was not the fact that he had no limbs, but that he did not complain once about it. Actually he made fun of himself.

What I loved about Nick was that he oozed passion.

He had purpose in life, and that was to inspire people to step up and live life to the fullest, no matter what.

However, one thing that stood out to me – and I'm sure to many others – as I watched the interview, is that he said we all have problems; the difference is in how you deal with it.

How do you deal with your problems?

Do you complain about the problem to all your friends and family yet do nothing about it or go about trying only once and end up giving up?

Or do you acknowledge that the problem exists and do something positive about it?

One thing you need to realise if you are ever to be truly happy in life, is that it's not the problem itself stopping you from being happy; it's your attitude.

Next time you are confronted with a challenge, here are a few tips to empower you:

1 Fight. Martin Luther King said: "The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands at moments of comfort and convenience; it's where he stands at moments of challenge and controversy."

2 Be grateful. Imagine for one moment if you were like Nick Vujicic, with no legs or arms. What would it be like? So women, instead of picking on your cellulite – be grateful you have legs to walk with. Appreciate the gift of living!

3 Focus. As I mention in my book, *Gain a Burning Desire for Life*, your mind's focus affects how you feel, behave and act. If you change your interpretation of an event, you can change the way you feel instantly. Focus is everything – what are you focusing on today?

4 Reassess. Most challenges occur over a period of time, for instance, putting on weight, accumulating credit card debt, marriage breakdown. Ensure you do something about the problem before it becomes too late. Check in with yourself and every area of your life on a weekly basis to ensure you are on track to living the life you want.

5 Create a calm mind. In order to make clear-cut decisions and find solutions to problems, you need to have a calm mind. Any inventor would agree with this. Either take time out daily to enjoy silence or take deep breaths regularly throughout your day. You'll be surprised at the difference this makes.

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Alive and kicking: Mr Monopoly helps launch the latest incarnation of the ever popular board game Monopoly, the World Edition, which features world cities in place of the traditional street names. Monopoly was invented in the 1930s and about 300,000 games are sold in Australia annually.

worldwide monopoly

The world's favourite board game has been given an international makeover, reports JUDY SKATSOON

It's the wholesome family game that leaves you with no qualms about taking your grandmother's last dollar and leaving her on the street.

Monopoly is a piece of cultural history, a tribute to capitalism and, often, the source of some of our fondest and funniest childhood memories.

"In our family there's the legend of how Aunt Olga kicked over the board in fury because something didn't go her way," says Richard Vickery, a Sydney neuroscientist and chair of Boardgames Australia.

"It's famous for the upsets because it's really brutal – it's naked capitalism, and there's no holds barred."

Manufacturer Hasbro says Monopoly is the world's most popular board game, sold to 300,000 Australians each year. This week the game has gone global, with Hasbro unveiling a new version featuring cities worldwide, instead of traditional street names.

The international edition is the latest spin-off of the classic property game played by some 200 million people around the world.

Monopoly was invented in the US during the Great Depression of the 1930s by Charles Darrow, says Amanda Blackhall, senior brand manager of games at Hasbro Australia.

"He developed this game because he wanted to play a game with his friends and his family that would make them feel rich even though it was the Depression," she says.

TIPS FOR WINNING AT MONOPOLY

1 Know the odds of landing on each square and use them to your advantage.

2 Concentrate on getting return for your dollar, for example, put three houses on one property rather than one house each on three properties.

3 Buy everything in sight.

4 Don't let your opponents know what you want.

5 Pay to get out of jail early in the game but wait for the double number in later stages.

6 If you land on a property when no one else has any money let it go to auction so you can buy it for less than market price.

Darrow's game, a variation on similar ones that had been around since the early 1900s, was initially rejected by Parker Brothers because of what were deemed to be 52 faults.

So he made it himself, using charms from his wife's charm bracelet as tokens, and sold it to friends.

Parker Brothers eventually came around to his idea and, when it caught on in Britain soon after, the head of local manufacturer Waddingtons sent his personal assistant out to make a list of locations to feature on the board.

"So the way that the UK streets actually came about being on the board was just from this PA going on a bit of a day trip and seeing the different streets around London," Blackhall says.

"The Angel Islington, which is on

the light blue square, is not actually a street – it was the pub where she had lunch that day."

The British edition of Monopoly first came Down Under in the 1940s.

As well as being played on rainy weekends and – though Hasbro doesn't like to acknowledge it – being a favourite during late-night drinking sessions, Monopoly is also played competitively.

World championships are held every four years, usually coinciding with the Olympics (but the next ones will be held in 2009 because of the launch of the international edition this year).

Former national champion Timothy Hawes, a 40-year-old home maintenance contractor and father-of-one from the Blue Mountains, has been playing on the competition circuit since 1991. He took out the national title in 2000 and represented Australia in the world championships in Toronto, Canada, finishing 12th out of 68 countries.

In high level competitions three rounds are played with a 1.5-hour time limit each. The person with the most assets is the winner.

Average assets at the end (players start with \$1500) usually amount to between \$11,000-\$16,000, Hawes says.

So is Monopoly luck or strategy? Hawes reckons it's 50/50.

"Without the strategy you can't use the luck," he says.

"I've seen games where everyone's had all the right properties and been absolutely beaten and I've seen games where they haven't had the right sorts of properties and absolutely blitzed it."

Vickery agrees that while Monopoly isn't a game of high level strategy like scrabble or bridge, there's more to it than the luck of the throw.

For example, some spaces are more likely to be landed on than others, and experts know the odds and use them to their advantage.

The closely guarded Monopoly World Edition, which was unveiled on Wednesday, was decided by an online poll of 58 countries in which voters were asked to choose from a list of the world's cities.

Sydney was the only Australian city chosen to be included on the board.