

WE WILL ALWAYS BE TEMPTED TO USE OUR **STRENGTHS** IN OUR OWN POWER RATHER THAN IN RELIANCE ON CHRIST. EVEN IN OUR STRENGTHS. THEREFORE, WHERE WE ARE MOST TEMPTED, WE NEED TO... **ABIDE IN HIS LOVE**. IT IS IN THE AREAS OF OUR LIVES WHERE WE ARE MOST ABLE, THE PLACES WE THINK WE ARE STRONG, WHERE WE ARE MOST OFTEN **CALLED INTO WEAKNESS**... WHEN WE TRY TO THRIVE IN SINFUL AUTONOMY, WE TURN INSTEAD TO ABIDING IN CHRIST AND PROCLAIMING TO HIM. "WITHOUT YOU, WE CAN DO NOTHING."

(Goggin, Jamin. *The Way of the Dragon or the Way of the Lamb*, p. 33 ©2017 Thomas Nelson.)

DARK SIDE CONTROL



BY JIM LEE
DIRECTOR OF CARE,
STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CARE
SUPERPOWER:

LEAPING SMALL BUILDINGS IN MULTIPLE BOUNDS

Sometimes my ministry day seems to consist of a disappointing string of events. During one of those days several years ago, I became deeply frustrated by not being able to control immediate circumstances or the people around me. In desperation, I cried out to God, "Who am I, anyway?"

The Lord graciously gave me words I have never forgotten. "You are mine."

I'm not the only one who struggles with a controlling dark side. Moses, whose servant leadership I aspire to emulate, had a dark side, too.

Moses clearly valued control in his leadership—and who can blame him? He was responsible for the humanly impossible task of leading a massive group of people in outrageous circumstances. It's no wonder we see glimpses of compulsion in his leadership at times. Moses vengefully murdered an Egyptian and covered it up (Exodus 2:12). He had a high need for control in mediating nearly every dispute and rendering judgments (Exodus 18) and occasionally publicly erupted in anger (Exodus 32:19-20, Numbers 20:1-13).

As Navigators, we pursue excellence in advancing the gospel of Jesus with passion and noble hearts. But unless we live out this calling from our identity in Christ, we're in danger of crossing from healthy, balanced leadership to criticalness, status-consciousness, addiction to others' approval, excessive moralism, and workaholicism.

The words God spoke to me, He also speaks to you. "You are mine."

Understanding this enables us to engage with others, not from a need for control or compulsion, but from our identity in Christ. Ministering from this place frees us to engage with others in a healthy and God-honoring way. As a child of God, you are deeply loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing, totally accepted, powerfully equipped, and a new creation complete in Christ—not because of human efforts, but because of Jesus and what He has done for you.

What is the Lord saying to you to help you grow in your dark spaces and allow Him to redeem it all for His glory and purposes? ◀

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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- 2020 PCAonline – Discover your design and aim it to deepen your abiding with Jesus. Eight weeks.
- Individual CliftonStrengths coaching
- Individual Myers-Briggs coaching
- Team coaching

SCARS (continued from p. 1)

Consider these *kintsugi* verses:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Psalms 147:3

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

1 Samuel 2:8

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.

Is a repaired *kintsugi* bowl stronger than its original form? No. And there's no guarantee that it won't shatter again. We will be hurt again, but we have the assurance and care of a skilled Mender. We may never regain our original strength, but this may ironically make us more suited to God's purposes. As disciple-makers, we are wounded healers, apprentice artists binding up our lost friends' scars with gold.

If you're wondering: yes, Jin and I are continuing in Japan, still holding out the gospel and making disciples. God's worthiness compels us. Feeling a bit less driven to prove, we're learning to boast of our golden scars. In the end, what shines brightest isn't us, but the work of the healer. ◀

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Staff Development and Care

IS YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS??? ALL NEW! ADVENTURES OF NAVMAN

THE AMAZING

upfront

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REAL LIFE STORIES AND PRACTICAL TOOLS
TO ADVANCE THE NAVIGATORS CALLING



GOLDEN SCARS

BY MARK ROOD
TOKYO CITY DIRECTOR
SUPERPOWER: BIRD LEVITATION



Feigning nonchalance, I moved past the campus security guard's gate. As I surveyed a gathering group of students, I drew strength from my motto: "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Surely pioneering The Navigators' Tokyo campus ministry wouldn't kill me. So I should be fine, right?

But as I walked across the Tokyo campus that day, I didn't feel fine or appreciative. What I really felt was broken and incompetent. Even after years of serving in Japan, I experienced it daily as a strange and threatening place. Unlike some of my colleagues, millennials who are open to the uniqueness of their wounds, I cringe when I consider my incompetency. I value feeling put together. When feelings of inadequacy overcome me, I seek security in putting on a mask to convince others that I'm whole, bulletproof, on top.

This is laughable. Inside, I'm nothing like that mask. Instead, I'm deeply afraid of being overlooked or obsolete.

If I so fear inadequacy, why did I want to challenge a Godzilla-like ministry in Tokyo? Many kingdom workers have been broken on these shores. I'm one of them. We try to spin things positively, but when we're most honest, we see that Japan continues on her course away from God, despite our best and sincerest efforts. For me as well as others, this has been a source of anxiety, fleshly drivenness, and heartbreak.

So why did I take on the challenge of pioneering this campus ministry? Partially, to prove myself. If I could succeed here, in this difficult place, surely that would attest to my worth. But Japan has often shown itself too much for me, leaving me feeling more like a failure than a success. My mantra, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," originally written by Nietzsche, was a lie. In reality, what doesn't kill you makes you weaker. What doesn't kill you makes you resentful, fearful, and jaded. What doesn't kill you makes you dysfunctional and fractured.

What are we to do with our shattered selves?

For over 400 years, artisans in Japan have refined a technique and art form called *kintsugi* to fix broken pottery. The name *kintsugi* combines two Japanese words—*kin* (gold) + *tsugi* (joinery). The artisans use a lacquer infused with powdered gold to create a repair that pays homage to the object's history. It emphasizes imperfections, displaying the golden seams as an augmentation.

Jesus, the great Mender, is a *kintsugi* craftsman. *Kintsugi* and gospel parallels abound:

- **Masterpieces.** Whether believers or not, we are the image of God. This craftsmanship is a legitimate basis of profound honor and dignity.
- **Shattered.** Through wounding experiences, failures, suffering, and weaknesses, we're no longer whole. We are marred masterpieces.
- **Repairable.** The heavenly craftsman skillfully works. A Japanese artisan will sit with broken pieces for a season to fully understand their history and to consider how to best restore them. It's not about perfection, but about connection. The process takes more than a month for a work of pottery—for our hearts, a lifetime.
- **Not like new.** The repaired self isn't a return to the original masterpiece. Jesus himself had scars.
- **Golden scars.** God is not a plastic surgeon, concealing our scars. Instead, He highlights them, not in red like a teacher's correction pen, but by illuminating them in gold. They're a source of pride, trophies of his skill.

SCARS (continued on p. 4)



MY DARK SIDE REDEEMED!

BY DEB ENTSMINGER
FLORIDA REGION
SUPERPOWER: RECREATION EMPOWERMENT



Severely hearing impaired for thirty-seven years, I'm well-acquainted with weakness and the challenges of limitations. For years I thought the opposite of *weakness* was *strength*. Then I learned two-thirds of weaknesses tend to be talents the Lord has given being **overused, misused, or underused.**

Overuse

For years, I was nicknamed "the Energizer Bunny." People kept asking when I was going to slow down. But I kept thinking of Galatians 6:10: "Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people..." I gladly sacrificed sleep, food, and exercise whenever I saw anyone in need.

So for me, the hardest part of being hearing impaired wasn't not hearing, but brain fatigue. Understanding through lipreading requires seven times more energy than normal listening. As my hearing declined, so did my capacity to interact. By the time I lost all hearing, I could only "listen" for two hours before my head began to ache.

Want to guess whose head frequently hurt?

Then the Lord did a miracle. After two cochlear implant surgeries, I went from zero hearing to regaining 95 percent voice recognition. My brain fatigue was gone! I was ready to go full-steam ahead. Instead, the Lord closed doors. The year before my surgery, I traveled to speak twenty-eight times. The year after, I only presented three times. What was happening?

I registered for a course on coaching people through transitions because many people I coach struggle with this. As I began the required reading, I sensed the Lord saying, *Don't just read the book. Answer the questions at the end of each chapter.* As I did, I discovered I was going through a transition, too! A time of isolation, frustration, confusion, and closed doors, but also a time where the Lord was inviting me into deeper intimacy.

The author used the image of a huge ship brought in to port and lifted out of the water for repairs as a metaphor for transition. "This is what I'm doing, Deb," said that familiar voice. "You have cracks under the waterline that need to be mended. Your ship would sink if you continued full steam ahead. You are here because I love you!"

One big crack that surfaced was my lack of limits. Digging deeper with Jesus, seeking to understand why, He revealed my talents of empathy and activator were in overdrive. Whenever my heart hurt seeing a need, I dove in to meet it. I needed to learn to ask the Lord, "Do you want me to actively help? Or did you let me see this to pray?"

What a difference it's making to bring those talents into surrender to the Lord!

BASEMENTS AND BATMOBILES

BY LYNDI LEE MARKUS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, UPFRONT
STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CARE
SUPERPOWER: SHAPESHIFTING



HEY, DEMITTA!
WHAT DO
SUPERHEROES
PUT IN THEIR
DRINKS?

My adaptability struck as I navigated my priorities and boundaries in several relationships where I felt for the other person more strongly than for myself.

Adaptability formed a toxic triple-bond with my in-born empathy and desire for others to experience harmony. I ended up always accommodating others' desires, never setting up healthy boundaries for myself... and never really knowing what I thought or what I wanted.

That's how you can know you've hit the dark side. (Nope, it's not that you've got cookies... or that you're suddenly binge-watching *The Flash*.) You might be operating out of the basement of qualities God created to be glorious in you when you see yourself crossing healthy boundaries of relationship; when you knee-jerk out of fear or self-preservation; when you're over- or under-functioning; or when you've left yourself vulnerable in areas that threaten your core values.

As you delve into this *Upfront*, consider your own superpowers. When do you feel most alive? Where do you most see your own impact? Are there correlations between your supercharged influence and your moments of greatest weakness, insecurity, or negative feedback? How does this impact your ministry? How might God help you shift from your basement to your Batmobile?

It can feel unsafe to acknowledge these places in ourselves, but don't worry, superhero: knowing your kryptonite, even when it's inside you, empowers you to combat it and fly into greater influence. You were marvelously made. Maybe you'll save the world. ◀

Misuse

As my coaching took off, I often met with five people per day, for one to two hours per session, with more requests streaming in. Whenever I said no, I struggled with regret and guilt. Then I sensed the Lord calling me to invest time writing. After repeatedly failing to make space for this, I realized once again my lack of limits was hindering my ability to follow Jesus!

When I asked the Lord what was at the heart of this (Jeremiah 33:3), He revealed I was misusing my talent of belief. Jesus' statement, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself..." (Luke 9:23) doesn't mean

I should routinely deny my God-given needs. God created me with needs. He doesn't call me to live life long term contrary to the way He made me. Instead, I am to deny myself doing what I want, rather than following Him. Ironically, I find I often need to deny myself by choosing not to deny my needs when God hasn't asked me to!

Underuse

While overusing my talents of empathy and activator and misusing my talent of belief, the ensuing busyness resulted in me underusing my talent for strategic thinking. As a result, I often was unwise in my use of time. While being coached, I developed strategies to keep my talents within boundaries the Lord laid for them. Being asked powerful questions like, "What are you afraid of?" sparked days of pondering and yielded life-changing insights. A significant need—one I should not deny—is taking time daily to process life with Jesus so I can live well, love well, and not wear out.

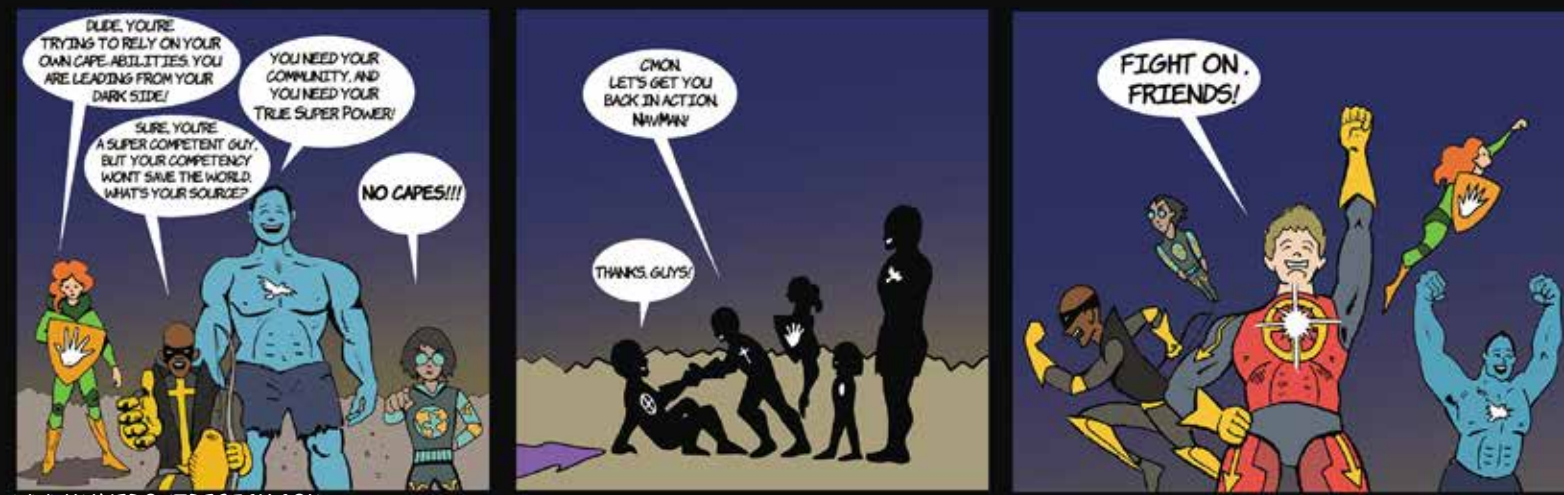
Best of all, as the Lord sets my heart free to use the talents He's given me the way He intends, deep healing is taking place. I'm being transformed and beginning to better reflect who the Lord is: one who delights in the well-being of His servant! (Psalm 35:27) Is this ever increasing my joy! ◀

Read more at Deb's website: www.navigate4life.com.

NAVMAN AND THE CAPE OF OMNI-COMPETENCE

AS BATTLE WAGES WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL NEXT DOOR TO EVERYWHERE, NAVMAN IS MESMERIZED...

ILLUSTRATED BY MAX ANTON



GREAT RESPONSIBILITY



BY DEMITTA CLAUSELL REESE
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING
STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CARE
SUPERPOWER: TELEPORTATION

W!
JUST ICE

"I feel like you're being a micromanager," my friend and teammate said to me. She was on my (non-Nav) event team, someone whose strengths were just a bit different from mine.

I was floored! How could she say that about me? That was the last thing on my mind, to micromanage anyone! (I'd sure hate it if someone micromanaged me!) I was so hurt! Besides, it was my job to keep the event moving forward. All I did was hold meetings and send an email every so often to remind people of deadlines and to talk to me if they needed help.

As we sat down to figure this thing out, I realized: for both of us, responsibility was a big deal! We were both highly responsible people, but the way we saw it was different, so we were clashing. She didn't need an email at all—she wanted to be trusted with the task. I was so in shock!

Understanding was the key. First of all, I had to understand myself. "Lord," I asked, "what did I do wrong? Am I really a micromanager?" I came to realize eventually that in micromanaging, I had been in the "basement," working from the dark side of the responsibility that was so strong in me. I thought something was wrong with me, and I internalized it, which made me want to withdraw and never send another email again!

Secondly, I was drawn to understand my friend in a different way. My "responsibility" expected everyone else to be responsible too. I needed to adjust my expectations. What was her background? What were her strengths? What could cause her perspective to be different from mine? What could we accomplish together? Understanding her story would build our relationship instead of allowing conflict to destroy it.

If we don't realize we're working from our dark side, the shame of being controlled by it could cause us to withdraw. But Scripture tells us not to be timid (Joshua 1:9). In fact, Proverbs 18:16 says that a person's gifts open the way before them—God intends us to walk forward confidently in the uniqueness He gave us. ◀