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WELCOME TO OUR HOPE PROJECT'S

# Newsletter

We're so glad you're here!

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**What we are about.....**

## **HOPE!**

This newsletter aims to bring hope and joy to your daily life by sharing my family's journey through unexpected challenges. We firmly believe that a positive outlook, faith, and the right circle of friends will help you tackle any obstacle with resilience and a smile. In the upcoming editions, we will candidly share our recent experiences dealing with Parkinson's Disease and Esophageal Cancer.

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## **Meet the Parker Family**

From left to right- my wife, hero, and best friend, Trina. My oldest daughter, Grace. My youngest daughter, Anna. I (Nick), the content creator, and editor.

Had I known the person my wife is, I'd marry her a thousand times over. Much of what I've learned I've learned from watching her for thirty-plus years.

She embodies Proverbs 17:22a

"A happy heart is good medicine *and* a cheerful mind works healing..."

Happy Birthday babe..... (15th edition/ on your birthday, the 15th)



Happy bday to my "trophy wife"

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*(Lessons learned continued...)*

### **Maintaining focus with a larger perspective.**

*But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” Luke 22:32*

What an opportunity we have when faced with various types of challenges/trials to allow them to shape us into the best version of ourselves. Our response, “Faith or Fear, Better or Bitter” will determine whether or not we reach our best selves. When we choose to use our trials to encourage others we may even exceed our own expectations.

Nick, are you saying that a terrible thing like sickness or divorce or loss or whatever, could actually, be a positive? Yes, that is what I’m saying! This newsletter is a direct result of Parkinson’s Disease, cancer, unplanned career change, and ultimately, my, choosing everyday, not to become bitter over the circumstance. Overwhelming circumstances honed all of my greatest heroes in life. I bet if you closely examined the exemplary figures you admire, it is their response to adversity that earned their status in your life as well. The choice they made when adversity rose is what transformed them from ordinary to extraordinary.

Crazy thing is, I believe extraordinary is within all of us. No, I KNOW it is! The same God that created your heroes, created you, right?

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I get asked pretty frequently now, How do you maintain your positivity with everything you've been through and are going through, health-wise? In a crowded room setting, my rapid-fire response is something like, "it is just a choice, and why make those around me miserable by being miserable?"

Yes, it is a choice, but the best choice is rarely the easiest choice, and it requires difficult and disciplined repetition to produce effective and lasting change. The choice is easy, the daily execution or process is hard. For example, I once was a runner and one day I will be again. I didn't become a runner overnight. I started running to prepare for Marine boot camp because I saw very few Marines who were not lean. In the 90's I preferred lifting weights but as the first Gulf War broke out, I enlisted and realized that the guys who carried weight, even muscular weight, had a hard time keeping up with the USMC running standard. If I had risen early one morning and run as far and as fast as possible I would have been no more a runner than the average person. But after thirteen weeks of bootcamp and one year into a six-year enlistment and a daily commitment to becoming a runner. I met the Marine's perfect run score time which is a sub-eighteen minute three miles. Many great Marines do, and many great Marines do not meet this level of proficiency.

No one get's off the couch one day and achieves this. Thank goodness I had a mentor, Achieving great things without a mentor is like choosing to walk cross-country instead of flying. Sure you'll get there but look at the wrong turns you might have avoided in the process. (Thanks Staff Sergeant Freddy Hernandez for teaching me to run, among other things.)

Before a cancer diagnosis, I allowed my weight to expand to a "fleshy" 200+ pounds because I



CHOSE to overeat. During the esophagectomy surgery, I lost the ability to eat much more than 8-10 ounces at any given time. Nearly everything we do in the south revolves around food, so this is a pretty big deal. If you knew my Mom and Mother-in-law, and how they are “offended” if you don’t eat seconds or thirds, you would get how this predicament could have bummed me out.



Cancer is the root cause of the weight loss that I now see as an open door to get back into running and it has once again become a daily part of my “BE BETTER” morning regimen.

"We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard," JFK



I believe if we just choose to do one “other thing” that is hard each day, we will be salt and light in our sphere of influence. Use your obstacle as an opportunity to encourage others and see what God will do!

## Thought of the day

"We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard," JFK

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## Coming Next Week

Lessons learned (continued)

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Nick Parker | 216 Wahoo Court | Seymour, TN 37865 US

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