

Inspirational Books Column for MyFamilyCaregiver.com

Written By Melissa Pilgrim

Overall Column Introduction...

Wouldn't it be great if there was a crystal ball you could peer into each morning, letting you know just what to be prepared for throughout the day? Anyone could use the help of knowing that, but when someone is caring for another daily (or depending on someone else's care themselves), getting any kind of help, advice, or direction to prepare for the "always unpredictable" can be appreciated. That is why each month we will feature an inspirational book here that will help encourage and inspire you in your caregiving journey. Happy Reading!

Book 2: Illusions, The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah

By Richard Bach

"Here is a test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: If you're alive, it isn't."

That is the underlying theme of Richard Bach's classic, inspirational novel *Illusions*. It is a mystical adventure about two barn-storming pilots named Richard and Donald who meet in an Illinois field while giving bi-plane rides to people. Each man is doing just what he wants to do in life—fly—and the conversations they have about life, personal happiness, and how things happen in this world (meaning on earth) is constantly thought-provoking.

Richard has been enjoying his drifter lifestyle of hopping from one Midwestern corn field to the next to give ten minute airplane rides to strangers, but was also getting a bit lonely. So when he sees another pilot named Donald doing the same thing he is thrilled to have a friend for a bit. But Richard soon learns that his new friend didn't just "appear" by coincidence. Donald is a "real Messiah" who has quit the profession and crowds that come along with it. When Richard can't believe an actual Messiah is allowed to do this, Donald begins to explain how everyone is always allowed to do exactly what they want to do, no exceptions. A fun, life-changing dialogue then starts between them as Donald answers Richard's questions about how people create experiences and situations in life, and Donald answers through either words, a demonstration, or a written maxim from a book he gives Richard called the *Messiah's Handbook*.

The profound messages from the *Messiah's Handbook* are some of the best (and most clever) things about this inspirational story. The handbook is a book Donald says they give to all Messiahs to read to learn how to even become a Master, and all you have to do is open it up to any given page and the answer to your question, problem, or situation (or whatever you need to know about it most at that time) will appear. Richard does this often, and the results are always a powerful inscription of a quote worth pondering, such as: "There is no such thing as a problem without a gift for you in its hands. You seek problems because you need their gifts;" and, "Every person, all the events in your life are there because you have drawn them there. What you choose to do with them is up to you." Donald notes that you can do this with any book, if you read it carefully enough.

The idea of this kind of book has led to many types of actual “Messiah’s” handbooks now in publication, one from the author Richard Bach himself called, *Messiah’s Handbook, Reminders for the Advanced Soul* and others such as *A Guide for the Advanced Soul* by Susan Hayward. These books are not meant to be based on any kind of religion, but rather they offer quotes from many different walks of life including spiritual Masters, philosophers, and inspirational authors. However, since you can do this simple exercise with any book, if you’d like to use your own one based on your own beliefs the story would encourage you to do that too.

Both *Illusions* and a companion Messiah-type of handbook are wonderful books to read as you are either giving or receiving care, for they can offer help and guidance to your questions about being in this time and situation in your life overall.

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