

So, From Victory To Zero Seven Times

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Father taught us about the 8 stages of restoration, from individual up to cosmos. Each stage you have to win the victory, and then start the next stage at zero. So, from victory to zero seven times.

I remember struggling while a single member, fundraising every day and trying to get myself to keep making my body do what my willpower wanted it to.

In those days matchings came out of the blue, with no advance warning. You did your mission until were just told to be somewhere in 3 days. Or 2. Or 1.

In my case, I was working a setup at a Sears at the mall in Lexington, Kentucky and renting a room from a little old lady five blocks away. For six weeks, I'd walked to the mall every morning at 7:30 and walked home around 9:30. By myself. I saw my landlady on Sundays, when the hours were shorter. I saw the sun for 15 minutes a day, if it was out.

My lunch breaks consisted of sprinting to the Chick Fil A, or the 'health food' store at the mall. Aside from running into my former MFT workshop team leader and the brother she fell with, my contact with members consisted of phoning in my result to John Hessel or talking to my commander, Mister Nakai.

Christmas was over, and I was due to pack up and take a bus back to Nashville on the 28th. One night I finished my dinner (rice and vegetables), and as I was washing my dishes (my landlady was already asleep) I looked out the window at the darkness and out of nowhere I just blurted "I'm not ready for the matching!" This was not something I'd been thinking about. Mr. Nakai called me the next day.

"Oy Sam. Come Nashbill, tomorrow."

"What? Mr. Nakai, I'm supposed to sell here two more days."

"Matching matching. New York. Come quickly."

"Mr. Nakai, I'm not ready."

"Anyway, Father need. Come."

I come. Saw Father for the second time in my life. We were packed into the Grand Ballroom of the New Yorker, more arriving every minute, singing holy songs. Brothers on the right, sisters on the left. The atmosphere was electric. I was dressed in my navy Kmart polyester pants, polyester white shirt, my best white socks, maybe with no holes in the toes, and a tan corduroy jacket. My fundraising clothes, that fit into my tan plastic leather suitcase.

Suddenly Father was on the stage and everyone was cheering, including me. He scowled, jabbed his finger in a 'sit down' gesture. Everyone laughed. We sat on the rug, packed in, touching each other. The then gestured and said something in Korean. "Father says to make an aisle down the center, another one in the middle." He didn't wait for us, he got off the stage as we were shuffling out the way. He pretended to kick people out the way. More laughter.

Then he asked "Does anyone have a birthday today?" He pointed to one brother and one sister who had their hands up, then flicked his hands together, his index fingers pointed at each other. Matched. As was

explained, they did a standing bow to Father and walked to the little balcony to talk, where translators were standing by. There was a sprinkling of applause.

I remember thinking "What!?!? THIS is how he matches people?" But he was already off, asking for foreign missionary sisters to stand up. Then he asked for MFT captain brothers to stand up. Lined them up across from each other. From my place near the back, in the middle of the brothers, I saw Father's legs moving between them, along with his translator, and other legs coming out the end of the line as he matched couples. A ripple of applause greeted each couple as Father pointed his fingers together, or sometimes just grabbed one and shoved them into the other.

At some point he must have asked for MFT brothers to come forward, because I was seated on the aisle now. Across from me was Janet Wada, who wasn't Janet Wada yet. She was a ridiculously enthusiastic fundraiser from my region. I remember this because when Father flicked his finger at me to stand up, then grabbed me by the lapel of my jacket and marched me up the aisle, I heard Janet say "Mansei, Sam!"

He pulled me up to about halfway, then pointed at a group of sisters standing against the far wall. They didn't have room to sit down. They went through "Me?" "Who, me?" gestures, Father shaking his finger "No" at them, then as they moved out the way, his finger stabbed forward. "You." "She pointed to herself. "Me?" "Yes." I was blushing, looking at the blue, green and yellow squares in the rug as she waded through the sisters to the aisle, looking not to step on anyone.

We half bowed, then went up to the balcony to talk. "What do you think?" "I trust Father's decision." "Me too." "What do we do now?" "I guess we go and bow to Father." Down we went, stood and waited until there were four or five couples, then someone called to Father. He turned towards us, we bowed, he spun around and got right back to matching before the light applause was finished.

We stood in line, gave them our names, told them our mission, got a picture taken, then stumbled out onto the mezzanine where a crowd of brothers and sisters from all over burst into applause and 'Mansei' s. Neither of us being particularly famous Moonies, we made our way through the crowd and went to see if we could find our shoes.

We made our way to MacDonalds, which was packed with other recently matched couples along with the usual smattering of New Yorkers, street people and tired execs looking for a burger and fries.

That was the beginning of my Blessed life, which was to be a rocky road, for sure. Even after the Blessing ceremony in July, it was a ridiculously heavenly patch in a life of endless door to door, shop to shop and blitzes. We had our original sin removed. We could now give birth to sinless children, we were past where Adam and Eve, and even Jesus got. We had true love and our children would be little Jesuses, spouting Godly words as soon as they could talk.

But we still had to go back to knocking on doors with peanut brittle and beheading shrimp on New Orleans streetcorners. And wait out our 3 ½ year separation period, and get 3 spiritual children before we ended our engagement and started family life. But still, we were floating on beams of spiritual joy. Some of us, anyway.

Because far from gliding up to heaven, we were abruptly flung into new levels of struggle, ones that our single selves hadn't had to deal with, apart from 'don't touch me sister' and 'don't touch me brother'. Some apparently very good, sacrificial, selfless brothers and sisters imploded after the Blessing. Our spouses irritated the daylight out of us, or deeply disappointed us. Or fought, disagreeing with things we thought were absolutely clear and undebatable. "What happened?" many of us wondered.

Father had taught us, as we sat on the rug covered cement floor at Belvedere, that at every level, we start from zero.

The Blessing ceremony, the most cosmic thing to happen on Earth ever, was the beginning of our struggle on a new level. It wasn't the end of struggles, as many of us had imagined. 'I'm going through it now, but when I'm matched and blessed, boy! I'll have someone always with me. She'll complete me, be my holy spirit.' My fiance and I felt, I should add, quite comfortable with each other right away. I was ready to be matched with a sister from Borneo with a bone in her nose, someone exotic. I got matched to someone who could be one of my cousins from the UK. Welsh and Scots was only a little bit intercultural.

But this is my point, and thank you for staying with me this long. We imagined the Blessing was the end of our struggles. It wasn't. We took our individual struggles and added family level struggles. We both had visions of what family life would be, and they were. Not. The. Same. Nor did we see Divine Principle the same way.

So when Mother opened the Cheon Won Gun, the holy temple where God would be able to live with us forever, she declared the Heavenly World open. We were overjoyed, and waited for Kim Jong Un to give

up and float south to unite the Koreas, peace and harmony to break out all over the world. Instead, wars intensified around the world. Israel was being condemned internationally. Ukraine attacked by Russia. More fighting between political parties in the US, to the point where many were ready to declare civil war. The world didn't float up into heaven, it fractured into a worse version of an ideal world, Satan's cheap imitation, once again. Just like cheap, twisted imitations of a true family sprouted everywhere after the Blessing, right now cheap, twisted versions of heavenly government and international relations are erupting like mold on last week's bread. Or zits on a teenager.

The end of the struggles on the world level? No. The beginning, the intensification of them. We didn't start from 100% victory, or even 90% or 50% or 30%. Zero. Far from sitting back and sipping ginseng tea as we watched the world arrange itself, we had to be attacked all over again by a world that basically said "Ideal world of harmony? Oh, yeah?!? Show me some of that. Take this! How do you like your ideal world now?"

Mother knew this. She didn't get bent out of shape when the roller coaster of the providence scraped the bottom. But we had forgotten about that, and here we are. Ground zero again. Ready to lose everything you have in this world?

We're not going to get there if we're dismayed, bummed out or frustrated every time Satan's world dicks us around by taking away physical things, like protection of the law, human rights, cash or buildings. Need to be like we were when we were single, roaming the country with one suitcase and one sleeping bag, never knowing where we'd be sleeping or who was going to kick us out of what. Getting arrested was par for the course, meant you were doing it right. You were winning the spiritual battle, becoming a child of God.

My very first day of fundraising, someone called the police on us in Lexington, Kentucky and I got a lecture in the back seat of a cop car. On my very first day as an MFTer, I'm being told "The citizens of Lexington, Kentucky are not impressed with Reverend Moon. Why don't you take your fundraising outfit somewhere else." They let us go, and we went to another area. In Lexington.

When I returned to Lexington two years later, stepping off a Greyhound bus sometime past midnight, we were greeted by two Lexington cops. "Welcome to Lexington. Where are you going? Do you have a ride?" I said no. "Where you going?" I gave the address. "We'll give you a ride there. Hop in." Once more in the back seat of a cop car in this town, this time being welcomed. "The city fathers, in their wisdom, didn't want people getting robbed in the middle of the night, women walking home alone in the dark. So we're there to meet every late bus. Is this your place here?"

I guess our Christian ancestors, or Jewish, or whatever ones we have, are still expecting that when Jesus comes on the clouds, everything's just going to be hunky dory, all milk and honey, manna and quail, harps and clouds from here on in, singing and praising, rapture and joy. Father and Mother abruptly reminded us that it's not a spectator sport, restoring the world, and it's all hands on deck until we get there. And that the path to heaven runs straight through hell. True Parents can't do it all by themselves. Buckle up.