

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

11. 6 Ways to Begin Each Day Encouraged and Hopeful

You are listening to episode 11 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm glad you're here! Welcome back. How do you begin your day? Do you have a certain routine in the morning? Do you begin your day encouraged and hopeful? Or are your mornings a struggle? Maybe we don't even think about our mornings. We just do what we've always done. One thing I've learned regarding my mornings is this: how I begin my day sets the tone for the rest of the day. This is the subject of today's episode. We'll find some encouragement through truth and some hope along the way. Let's get to it.

Mornings are my favorite time of day.

And it's okay if mornings aren't your favorite. Maybe your favorite time of day is afternoons or evenings or bedtime. Don't you love how God made us all different with different preferences? I love that! So, it's okay if you don't particularly love mornings. You won't find any judgement from me on that.

But for me, each morning I appreciate the promise of a new day, and the hope that accompanies it. I also appreciate sunrises. If you follow me on social media, you probably already know my fascination for sunrises and sunsets. I take photos of our Iowa versions of them often and share them in my feeds.

So, when I get to watch the sun rise over the horizon through my kitchen window, I get caught up in the moment. It's something so very special to me, and even though I've tried, I just cannot seem to put this experience into words. It's almost as if it's a "holy moment" for me, standing there in awe watching the sky transform as the sun ascends. Not wanting to sound "super spiritual" though, it's one of those moments in my day where I feel God's presence so very near me. Just me and God. It's the time of day I pause and thank God for giving me a new day, for allowing me a glimpse of His glory as He raises the sun, and for the vibrant colors that sometimes accompanies it when clouds are present. Watching the sun rise truly sets the tone for my day.

What sets the tone for your day?

I invite you to think about it for a minute. Because how we begin each day matters. How we consider the gift of each day matters. Because what we do with each day matters.

So, how do you begin the day encouraged and hopeful? Because I'm guessing we each want to live an encouraged and hope-filled day, right? No one wants to be discouraged and hopeless all day long. At least I don't think anyone does. I think we each want to have a good day, not a depressing one, right?

But sometimes we can't control what's happening around us or to us. Some days we wake up tired and cranky and in a mood not even coffee can cure. Some days we wish for a week of weekends because,

goodness, we could use a break. And some days we'd rather just stay in bed, hidden under the covers where it's safe and quiet.

I get it.

So, let's talk about how you and I can begin each day encouraged and hopeful.

Even on those days when life isn't so pleasant.

Because we may not be able to control what's happening around us, but we can control how we react to it. And yes, we may wake up cranky, but we can choose our attitude the rest of the day. We may not be able to have a week of weekends, but we can make the best of the day that's ahead.

We can choose to start the day encouraged and hopeful.

Here are 6 Ways to Begin Each Day Encouraged and Hopeful:

1. Start the day with God.

As I just mentioned, beginning the day with God sets the tone for the rest of my day. Whether it's through the morning's sunrise or when I sit down and read my daily devotional, starting my day with God helps me keep a proper perspective on the day ahead as I put my trust in Him and ask for His guidance. This grounds me, so to speak, and reminds me I won't be alone today, no matter what comes my way. Reading scripture, reading a devotional, praying, journaling, sitting in silence are simple, yet powerful ways to start the day with God.

Remind me each morning of your constant love, for I put my trust in you. My prayers go up to you; show me the way I should go.

Psalm 143:8 GNT

2. Drink a full glass of water after waking.

Drinking water has so many health benefits, doesn't it? A number of years ago I started the practice of drinking a full glass of water right out of the gate each morning. In fact, many [studies have shown](#) that drinking 16 ounces of water immediately after waking in the morning revs up our metabolisms, helps our bodies flush out toxins, hydrates us, gives our brain fuel, and may help us eat less. I'm all about this! It's such a simple way to begin the day healthy and positive.

3. If possible, take an early morning walk.

Is there anything better than fresh morning air? Getting that air into our lungs does something for our minds, our bodies, our attitudes. Even if it's just 10 minutes, a brisk walk outside can help set the tone for the day. Or choose a different exercise. This can be a challenge for me in the winter months living in Iowa. But my morning walks are my second favorite part of the day. Try to find a way to get moving in the morning. It can make [all the difference](#).

4. Journal

I started this practice about four months ago, and let me tell you, it has been life-transforming for me. I'm not even exaggerating here. Truly, this one activity has completely refreshed my days. It's not always

easy for me to fit it in each morning, but it's a night and day difference when I'm able to. And you don't have to be a writer to benefit from this. Each of us can benefit from the practice of journaling.

This is what I do: I use a plain, old notebook, with a plain, old pen, and I sit down with it at my dining room table and just begin writing. I let my thoughts spill out on the paper. They may have to do about the day ahead, or something I'm struggling with, or something new in my life. They might be about situations, ideas, frustrations. I might write out a prayer or a promise or a new practice I'd like to incorporate into my life. I write until I feel I'm done, until there's nothing else to write. That's usually 1-3 pages. I don't edit what I've written. It may look messy and may contain misspelled words and wrong punctuation, but that doesn't matter.

But what I've learned in doing this is something happens when I get all that stuff out of my head and on to paper. It frees me up. I find I'm more creative and can think more clearly throughout the day. And I am more at peace, I am more encouraged, and I'm more hopeful. It's quite amazing!

5. Choose to look at the day ahead differently.

Sometimes all it takes to start your day uplifted is to choose to look at it differently. What if we looked the day ahead as a gift? Instead of dreading what's ahead, what if we embraced the adventure of it all? What if we chose to use our time to be a blessing and a burden-lifter to those around us? We get one chance to live this day. One chance. We will never be able to live this day again. So, let's make it count.

6. Start thankful.

What if today was the very last day we took a breath on this earth? Would we live it differently? Would we love others differently? Or, would we be a bit more thankful? I say let's not wait for that day before we live thankful. How about we be noticers of the blessings in our lives today? And not only that, but to thank God for each one. May we allow our hearts to be filled with gratitude as we begin this day and every day. The thing is, thankfulness is contagious! Our thankfulness rubs off on others, and as we live thankful, others will be inspired to do the same. You know? We each have much to be thankful for, don't we? Hey, and this is something we can each write in our journals each morning... what we're thankful for!

So, are you ready to begin the day encouraged and hopeful?

I encourage you to pick just one or two from the ideas I've shared. You don't have to start them all to make a difference. But you can add them in as you go if you choose. No matter what time of day you're listening to this, you can begin right now. It doesn't have to start in the morning. We can adjust our attitudes and actions any time of day.

To encourage you further, I've created a printable of these ideas on my free Resource page on my website. Feel free to print it out and use it as you wish. Place it where you'll see it each morning. I pray it helps you begin your day encouraged and hopeful. The link to my Resource page is in the show notes.

Come on over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. It's filled with others just like you who desire to live encouraged and inspired. We like to call this the most encouraging place on the internet. The link to this Facebook group is in the show notes.

And if you've found encouragement and hope through this episode, please consider giving it a review or rating so others can find it too. Encouragement matters, doesn't it??

We've heard it said, "Each day is a gift. That's why it's called the present." (Bil Keane) May you and I open the gift we've been given today with great anticipation and excitement, and as we open it, may we be generous enough to share it with others. Thank you for joining me today. I appreciate you and pray you live life encouraged and hopeful. God bless you, friend.

Julie Lefebvre