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Work-Around

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Work-Around

If we need to light a fire, but there are no matches available in the house, we might get a start by taking a piece of tightly rolled paper to the kitchen stove and igniting it. Most of us have lacked one or more of the proper tools for some job we were determined to complete, and improvised. We created a work-around that was exactly suited to the circumstances.

Sometimes we need a work-around to accomplish a personal goal of an interior kind. How many times have we had a positive experience with some activity, decided upon a regular course of action, but did not follow through? For most of us, a moment of desire does not translate into habitual action. We might have decided to stop smoking, or begin eating more healthily, initiate a plan of regular exercise, take time for regular prayer and reflection, or keep a spiritual journal, but made no appreciable change to our ongoing behavior. Even a decision to take some time each week for something personally satisfying might be surprisingly difficult even for an otherwise well-organized person to implement in his or her own life. A work-around is the connection between wanting something and bringing it to the level of an effective habit.

For example, I found much satisfaction in doing some reading about spirituality, so I determined to read similar articles and books on a regular basis. It did not happen. I had not made the proper or realistic link between my sincere desire and my accustomed habits. I needed a work-around - which was and is, to make "appointments" in my personal calendar.

One person's work-around might be to place a sticker on the bathroom mirror. For another, writing a note in a daily or weekly calendar. In determining what action to take in order to move from desire to implementation, we need to strategize. If we want to begin exercising, we could think about and select a modest and realistic length of time and mode of exercise, rather than choose an "ideal" norm that is more wish than choice. A work-around is not only or primarily the words or notation we make, but the process of honestly assessing our real interests and our real and present limitations of time, energy, availability, and our preferences and habits.

God is the Master of every work-around that we might devise. We might not know ourselves well enough to imagine the steps to take that will enable us to achieve our goals. God knows us better than we

know ourselves, so we can appropriately ask for deeper awareness of our weaknesses and strengths, and for the inspiration to make honest and realistic plans for moving forward with our lives. How could God refuse a request for directions? Seeking a work-around draws us into a deeper and more honest relationship with God.

Some of us have had thoughts occur that making a change or establishing a new behavior is not worth the effort. Such thinking leads to inaction, of course. The beginning of positive movement occurs – it is God at work in us – when we become aware of a desire for becoming more, not for acquiring additional things. When we bring the desire to prayer, we might still find in ourselves some inertia and resistance, but we can insist on the reality of the movement within us, and keep reminding God (and thereby ourselves) that we want to move forward. We have both a right and a responsibility to keep growing in the direction that our inspirations lead us.

We use a work-around to accomplish something practical. What could be more practical than developing our potential as children of God?