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YOU HAVE TO WAIT IN LINE TO RIDE THE ROLLER COASTER

Imagine that a child asked you to take him to ride on a roller coaster and you agreed to do that. The child would likely be very happy. Now picture you taking that child to an amusement park and getting in line to buy the admission. The child might fuss a little about the wait but you could explain that the waiting is part of what has to be done in order to ride the roller coaster. Now you are in the park and you both walk to the roller coaster that can be seen from afar. The child is probably getting excited and is quite eager to ride. There is a sign that states that there is a 90 minute wait in line. At this point the child might have become rather upset and fussy because he WANTS TO RIDE THE ROLLER COASTER. You might be tempted to say, "Look, you are the one that wanted to ride the roller coaster. I have already ridden the roller coaster several times and have no need for further rides. I am indulging you by investing the time and money and effort to give you this experience that you wanted and I don't want to hear any more fussing and complaining. Amusement parks are not all rides and fun and excitement. Waiting in line is part of the deal. There can be no roller coaster if you are not willing to wait in line."

Now the child has to make a decision. He hadn't necessarily realized that waiting was part of the deal. How could he have known if no one had thought to tell him ahead of time? Knowing ahead of time what hardships may be involved in an undertaking allows us to be prepared and removes the element of unpleasant surprise. Knowing about the wait, we might still choose to ride. Not knowing can take much of the pleasure out of the experience when we are finally confronted with the unpleasant reality of the wait.

Although a great many of life's blessing and opportunities may include periods of unpleasantness, they are less apt to derail us or sidetrack us if we know about them ahead of time. People that climb mountains or go on long hikes know ahead of time that there will be periods of discomfort and that simply becomes part of the over-all experience.

The greatest adventure and the most thrilling ride we'll ever take is life. But for those of us who haven't been told about the waiting and the occasional unpleasantness, the difficult times can be misinterpreted to mean that we aren't doing it right or that somehow we are not worthy of a better experience. That would not be true. Even Mother Theresa may have had to wait at the pearly gates for St. Peter to fetch the key.