

Gumdrops for the Mind

Damita E. Shaw

*A collection of short stories that feed
the minds of preteens and up!*



Say It, Mean It Publishing
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Gumdrops for the Mind

By Damita E. Shaw

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From the Author...

Dear Reader,

Several of the stories featured in *Gumdrops for the Mind* are based on true experiences. Some of them may appear to be sad, but unfortunately, that's the way life is sometimes. We'll always be faced with challenges as long as we live, some good and some bad, but it's all about the choices we make when we are faced with those challenges that make us winners. By writing realistic stories, I hope I can help you learn from the mistakes of others. Once you read the stories, I sincerely hope you'll find a positive path to pursue if you're ever faced with situations like those the characters in the stories encounter.

When you're faced with situations that cause you to have to make a decision, try to think about what Jesus would do. I know that it may be hard sometimes to do that when you're a young person faced with things like peer pressure, gang violence, wanting to be accepted *and* puberty. But, you *can* rise above anything with God on your side. During those challenging times, you have to exercise your faith and pump up your self-esteem. Without a doubt, you have to *know* that you are special and you are destined to be somebody someday. You also have to *know* without a doubt that you don't have to do things that are wrong just to be accepted.

If a challenge ever seems too big and you don't know what to do, reach out to a friend who will stick closer than a brother and who will be with you no matter what comes your way. That friend's name is Jesus. Make sure you know Him personally!

Until my next book, stay encouraged and keep reading!

God bless you,

Damita

This book is dedicated to all teens who make the decision to find positive paths to pursue and recognize the greatness within them to be the leaders they are destined to be.

*To Eyreal Jonái Shaw,
who continuously gives me my reason for existing.*

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Have You Ever Wanted Something So Badly? 73

There it was in the Hands Down Sports department store window. It was bright, shiny and in every color of the rainbow. I had my eyes on the one in my favorite color, blue. I wanted it and I wanted it badly, but it was \$200! As I stared at the electric scooter, I knew it had to be mine. I had to find a way to get it, and I had an idea about how I was going to do it.

When I managed to remove my eyes from the shiny electric scooter that was for sure to be mine one day, I walked home. I couldn't get home fast enough. I ran in the house yelling.

"Dad! Dad!"

"Collin, I'm back here in the office," Dad replied.

"Dad, I saw the coolest scooter. I got to have it, Dad! I just have to."

"Really?" he asked with little emotion.

"Yeah, Dad. I'm telling you, it's got my name written all over it," I told him.

"Oh? How much was it?"

"It was just 200 bucks."

"How much do you have?"

"Forty bucks."

My dad chuckled.

"Are you sure your name was spelled correctly on the scooter?" he asked. "It sounds like it was missing several letters of your name with only forty bucks!"

"Ah, come on, Dad."

"Come on and do what? With just forty bucks, it sounds like the only scooter you're gonna be scooting is your big feet, son."

"Dad, you're wrong for that. You're not going to help me out?"

“Well, let me see. Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, no! I will help you out of my office,” he said laughing.

“Dad, I’m for real. Quit playing.”

“Collin, does it really sound like I’m playing?”

Dad had a big grin on his face.

“Yeah, it does sound like you’re playing.”

“Well, hold on.”

He turned his swivel chair around to where I could only see the back of his head. He stayed that way for a few seconds and then he turned back to face me. When he turned around, his face was serious like he was Marlon Brando in the Godfather. Dad looked me straight in my eyes and pretended as if he could only speak above a whisper.

“How’s this, Collin? Does it look like I’m playing now?”

He could only keep that straight face for a few seconds before we both started to laugh.

“See, Dad, you know you’re wrong for that.”

“All right, son, I have a serious question for you. How badly do you want the scooter?”

“I want it bad.”

“If you want it that badly, are you willing to make a sacrifice to get it?”

“Yeah, Dad, I am.”

“Well, that’s the first rule to achieving your goals. Yeah, I could buy the scooter for you, but things you get from your own hard work, you appreciate them more.”

“What sacrifices will I have to make?” I asked.

“I don’t know. It depends on what you have to do to achieve your goal. Say for instance you decide to take a little job at the nursery with your mom doing odds and ends, that’s going to cut into your time to hang out with your buddies playing basketball. That’s a sacrifice you’ve got to be willing to make to achieve your goal of getting the scooter. But that’s only the beginning.

You spend your money as soon as you get it in your hands. You've got to start holding on to it so you can have enough money to get what you want."

"Dad, I want that scooter. I'm ready to make all of the sacrifices necessary to get it."

"Okay. I tell you what, if you get the money for the scooter, I'll buy you the matching headgear and elbow and knee pads."

"Thanks, Dad. That'll be great!"

"All right, well, the first thing you need to do is call Hands Down Sports to find out the total cost of the scooter including the taxes. You go and do that and come back."

"Okay, Dad, I'll be right back."

I dashed out of my dad's office on a mission. That electric blue scooter was calling my name. Collin! Collin! Collin! And I was ready to answer. I made the call and got the total cost of the scooter. Since I only had \$40, I thought I would be an old man and my scooter would be an electric wheel chair before I could save up enough money to get the scooter.

Dad was doing some work on his computer when I made it back to the office.

"Dad, they said it'll cost \$218.48."

"Okay, so now we know what we need to work towards?"

"Yep and I'll probably be 80 years old by the time I save up the money."

"Well now, hold on. You'll be surprised at how quickly you can come up with the money. Have a seat and let's talk. I need to give you some financial advice on how to handle your business as a man as opposed to a boy," he said with a huge grin on his face.

"Oh, so it's like that? Well, I'm ready for whatever."

"All right, my son, here we go."

Dad scribbled some figures on a piece of paper and then turned it towards me.

“It’s not as bad as you think, Collin. Take a look,” Dad reassured.

You have \$40.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$218.48 \\ - 40.00 \\ \hline 178.48 \end{array}$$

Let’s round that to \$180.

You receive \$15 a week for allowance.

15 divided into the total amount of 180 = 12 weeks.

There are 4 weeks in a month. So, it will take 3 months to save up the money!

“But check this out, Collin,” he said. “If you work at the nursery with your mom for about five hours a week, you can make an extra \$25 per week. Or if you cut a yard per day for a week, charging \$20 per yard, that will be an extra \$100.

“The only thing is, Collin, you’ve got to earn the extra money without neglecting your responsibilities at home. If I see you slipping, I’m going to snatch you right on back up!” he said with his usual chuckle.

“I know you will, Dad. You’ve only had to do that a couple of times, but that was when I was just a kid. I’m 13 now and I’m a man.”

“Okay *man*,” he repeated with disbelief. “Let’s see what you do with this goal. Don’t let me see you six months from now still riding on those big feet of yours!”

“See, you got jokes. But, I’m getting ready to show you what I’m made of. So, you get your laughs out now ’cause it’s about

to be on like a pot of neck bones.”

“Okay, I hear what you’re saying. We shall see,” he said.

Dad handed me a composition notebook and a sheet of paper he printed from his computer.

“Son, the first thing I want you to do is go on the Internet and get a color picture of the scooter you want. Or go to the store and ask them to give you a picture. Cut the picture out and glue it on the front of this notebook. Next, make a list of all the jobs you plan to do and how much you think you’ll earn doing each job in your composition notebook. Then, each time you do a job and get paid for it, I want you to record all of the information on this worksheet.”

When	Job	Amt. Paid	Balance

And that’s exactly what I did. I jotted down several different jobs I could do and how much I could get paid for doing them.

I started working at my mom’s nursery watering, pruning and repotting plants in the evenings. That was real easy money because it’s something that comes natural for me. My mom swears that I have a green thumb that’s lined with velvet cloth when it comes to caring for plants. I think she just says that because I’m her son, but I can nurse a plant back to health in no time.

When I shared my goal with my mom, she paid me \$6 an hour instead of paying me the regular \$5 an hour. Her help didn’t go

unnoticed. I gave 110 percent on everything she asked me to do. I even did extra things on my own.

I worked hard from 3:00 to 6:00 with my mom. And around 7:00, after I finished taking out the garbage and the other things I was responsible for doing around the house, I ate and did my homework. I was glad it was close to the end of the school year because I really didn't have a lot of homework to do. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to work as many hours and keep my schoolwork up. My dad was pretty cool about most things I did, but if a C came through the Davenport doors, he was like hol' up, wait a minute! He didn't play with grades no way, no how. I learned that early and I tried hard to make sure I didn't cross him in that way.

When I looked at my worksheet, my funds were rising slowly but showly.

Date	Job	Amt. Paid	Balance
Sunday	Savings		40.00
Monday	Nursery	18.00	58.00
Tuesday	Nursery	18.00	76.00
Wednesday	Nursery	18.00	94.00
Thursday	Nursery	18.00	112.00
Friday	Nursery	18.00	130.00
Friday	Allowance	15.00	145.00

I was getting to the \$180 so quickly that I started liking the idea of saving. Each day I looked at my blue electric scooter on the front of my notebook, it gave me more energy and determination. I decided to save up enough money to buy my own headgear and elbow and knee pads. I wanted to surprise my dad with my decision to buy my own accessories, which was an extra \$40. Each time Dad asked me how my saving was going, I just answered with as little information as possible.

“Collin, how’s everything going?”

“Pretty good, Dad.”

“You should be nearing your goal with all of the extra hours you’re putting in at the nursery.”

“Yeah, I’m working it out!” I said proudly.

“I hope you’re working it out with those grades, too. I know you’re trying to achieve your goal, but you’ve got to stay focused on the real prize, education.”

“I know, Dad, you don’t have to go there. I got it covered,” I reassured him.

“All right, I’m counting on you.”

“Dad, I got this!”

“All right.”

He disappeared out of the kitchen to the front room to speak to my mom. I was all happy inside because I was really handling all of my responsibilities *and* saving money at the same time.

Date	Job	Amt. Paid	Balance
Saturday	Nursery	48.00	193.00
Sunday	Walking/Reading to Mr. Allen	20.00	213.00
Monday	Nursery	18.00	231.00
Tuesday	Nursery	18.00	249.00
Wednesday	Nursery	18.00	267.00
Thursday	Nursery	18.00	285.00

I was finally there and I had achieved my goal! I achieved it just in time to start my summer off with my shiny blue electric scooter! When I let my dad know that I was ready to purchase my scooter, he took off from work early to take me to the store. By 3:30 I was at Hands Down Sports.

When the salesperson rolled my sparkling blue scooter to the

counter with the matching accessories, I felt like I could walk on air. My dad had taken the perfect opportunity to teach me the advantages of goal setting and planning - right when I wanted something so badly I was willing to make a sacrifice to get it.

“That will be \$263.45,” the salesperson said.

I pulled out my wallet and opened it up, but my dad didn't see me remove \$265 because he was reaching for his wallet to pay for the accessories.

“Dad, I got it,” I said.

“To pay for the accessories, too?”

“Yes, sir, I got it!”

“You've saved up more than the \$180?”

“Yeah, I did it, Dad! I even have a few bills to spare,” I said with excitement.

“Son, I'm really proud of you! You have far exceeded my expectations. But, a deal is a deal. I said I would pay for the accessories if you saved enough money to buy the scooter and that's what I'm going to do.”

“Okay. But I wanted you to know that I saved up more so that I could buy them myself.”

“That's great, Collin, but I've got to keep my end of the bargain. I can truly say you are the *man*, Collin! You are the *man*!”

We turned our attention back to the salesperson. I paid for my scooter and my dad paid for the accessories. We walked out of the store as *two* proud men.

My Daily Affirmation

Another Day

Though there are times when I get angry and I feel nothing is going my way,

I try to remember all hope is not gone; tomorrow's another day.

Another day to make the best of what life has presented to me.

Another day to realize to all my happiness I hold the key.

Each day I awake I'm reminded of God's love.

So, there's nothing in my life that I can't rise above.

I'm destined to unleash the power within me.

The sky is not even the limit to all I can be.

When the day comes to an end, I'm reminded again of God's great love.

He wants me to soar like the wings of a beautiful white dove.

Signing this affirmation means I am truly committed to loving and believing in myself.

Other Works by Damita E. Shaw

www.sayitmeanit.com

Can Broken Wings Still Fly? is a book every parent/mentor will want to share with a teen/young adult. It candidly looks at how AIDS and teen pregnancy are affecting our teens today and meticulously weaves the subject matter into a riveting story.

Sasha Campbell is a very studious and mature 17 year old. Tauryn Miller, her younger sister, is an average tenth grader who thinks she has it going on until she comes face to face with death. Sasha willingly goes through the fire with her younger sister as she confronts the possibilities of being pregnant and HIV positive. (Ages 12 and up)

Book **\$9.95**

What's Wrong with Telling a Lie? is a story about a little boy named Jaime who continuously lies about everything until one day telling the truth is ever so important.

Pet Detectives Pinkie and Binkie: The Case of the Missing Pie is an investigative story that teaches children why stealing is not cool at all.

This is a colorful read-along children's book with an accompanying CD or audiocassette. There are two stories in the book/CD or book/audiocassette and the author narrates them both. Each story is complete with questions and answers at the end for story discussions. (Ages 3-8)

Book and CD **\$14**

Book and Audiocassette **\$12**

Fruity Fur is a delightfully illustrated book that will become a household favorite. Your child will take a mischievous journey with Clee, who is as naughty as a dog can be. There's not much he won't sink his choppers into, but his owner's magical fruit will prove to be more than Clee can chew! Complete with questions at the end for story discussion. (Ages 3-8)

Book **\$7.95**

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