



## STICKING POWER

**I** WAS OLDER THAN I WOULD LIKE TO ADMIT WHEN I glued my lips together.

It should be a story reserved for elementary or junior high school children—high school age would be pushing it. For me, though, it was over the summer during my college years, and it involved nail glue. Think less metal-pieces-you-hammer-into-wood nails, and more the nails that grow on your fingers. The theory behind nail glue is that if you rip a fingernail, you can apply this gooey adhesive and, voila, the nail glues back together. So there I was one summer night, applying nail glue to my fingernail while standing in the dark of the kitchen. As I finished up the task, I absentmindedly pushed a strand of hair back, lightly brushing my hand past my face and transferring the slightest dab of nail glue onto my lip. My immediate reaction was to rub my lips together, to wipe it away. Instead, they stuck together. As disturbing as the concept of nail glue is, I will give it this: the stuff creates a powerful hold. It sticks!

It is interesting what sticks to us in life. People, ideas, goals, dreams and desires brush up against us and, rather than being brushed away, stick to our hearts and souls, shaping the path on which we travel. Sometimes it is the unexpected, unplanned encounters that stay with us for so long and change the course of our lives.

What doesn't stick, in this day and age, is also interesting. By all accounts we are living in fast times. It feels oddly uncomfortable to have any downtime, moments when we disconnect, sit in silence and think. We feel guilty if we are not constantly on the move, filling our days by rushing from one commitment to the next, dashing off quick texts in between appointments. In a disgusting shift, it has become normal if not expected for people to be sitting across from one another, scrolling through their phones to check Facebook updates, email accounts and Twitter feeds, while only occasionally glancing up at the other person. There is so much happening and the message we give and receive is, "Go, go, go!"

Could our fast-paced, over-committed lives be keeping the things

that really count from sticking? Are we already stuck with so much of the wrong stuff, that we aren't leaving room for the important things – the people, the moments, the experiences that will mean the most and have the greatest impact on us and bless our lives long-term more abundantly than we could ever imagine?

Fast-paced lives can translate into expecting everything right now, without the work. I recently heard someone say, "Impatience is the cause of all debt." When we want the fast-paced, right-now gratification, and aren't willing to put in the work and stick with it, we wind up in debt. This is not just financial debt, but debt in every area of our lives: personally, professionally, financially and relationally. We live in a world that encourages the quick dabble, give-it-a-try and then move on approach. In living this way, life becomes like an all you can eat buffet. There is so much to try that we simply sample, taking a taste here and a taste there, but never sticking around to try a full serving.

How rare it is to find something that captures your heart and soul, and that you are willing to stick with; something that has sticking power.

Michael Butler (featured on page 42) has sticking power. He is the executive director of Hutton Settlement, where he has been for almost 30 years, capping off a career dedicated to bettering the lives of young children. Michael is an example of sticking it out – sticking with his job, even when it was tough, sticking in a field of work that demanded much from him, and sticking with his wife for over 40 years of marriage. In fact, he stuck around waiting for her for years before they were married.

Such commitment is not often praised in our current culture. "New" and "improved" are splashed across packaging, and check stand headlines boast celebrity gossip, showing people's new hairstyles, new bodies and new spouses. We tire so quickly of things – people, places and routines – once the shine wears off and work is required. Work to put things back together, work to strengthen what has become weak and work to take something beyond our expectations. Too often we want to upgrade, rather than to stick.

When people, dreams and hopes truly stick, it can be beautiful. In this month of love, look for examples of people sticking together. Not just romantic love, but also love for our siblings, family, friends, coworkers - unconditional love. This is the love that needs to be given, so that we can all stick together and make it through each day of life.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 says, "Two are better than one for they have a good return for their work: If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls down and has no one to help him up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?"

We are not meant to live life alone, we are meant to live life together. To stick together, whether that is in a marriage, a family, with friends and peers, or sticking to our hopes, our dreams and the desires of our hearts. It takes effort, energy and sometimes tears, but isn't life better when we stick to it, through the end?

What is it that you want to stick in your life? Feel free to share, my lips are sealed!

Happy reading!

*Blythe*