



*Today's Suggested  
Topic is...*

**Powerless**  
**Not**  
**Helpless**

## Step 1: Surrender

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -  
that our lives had become unmanageable.



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# POWERLESS

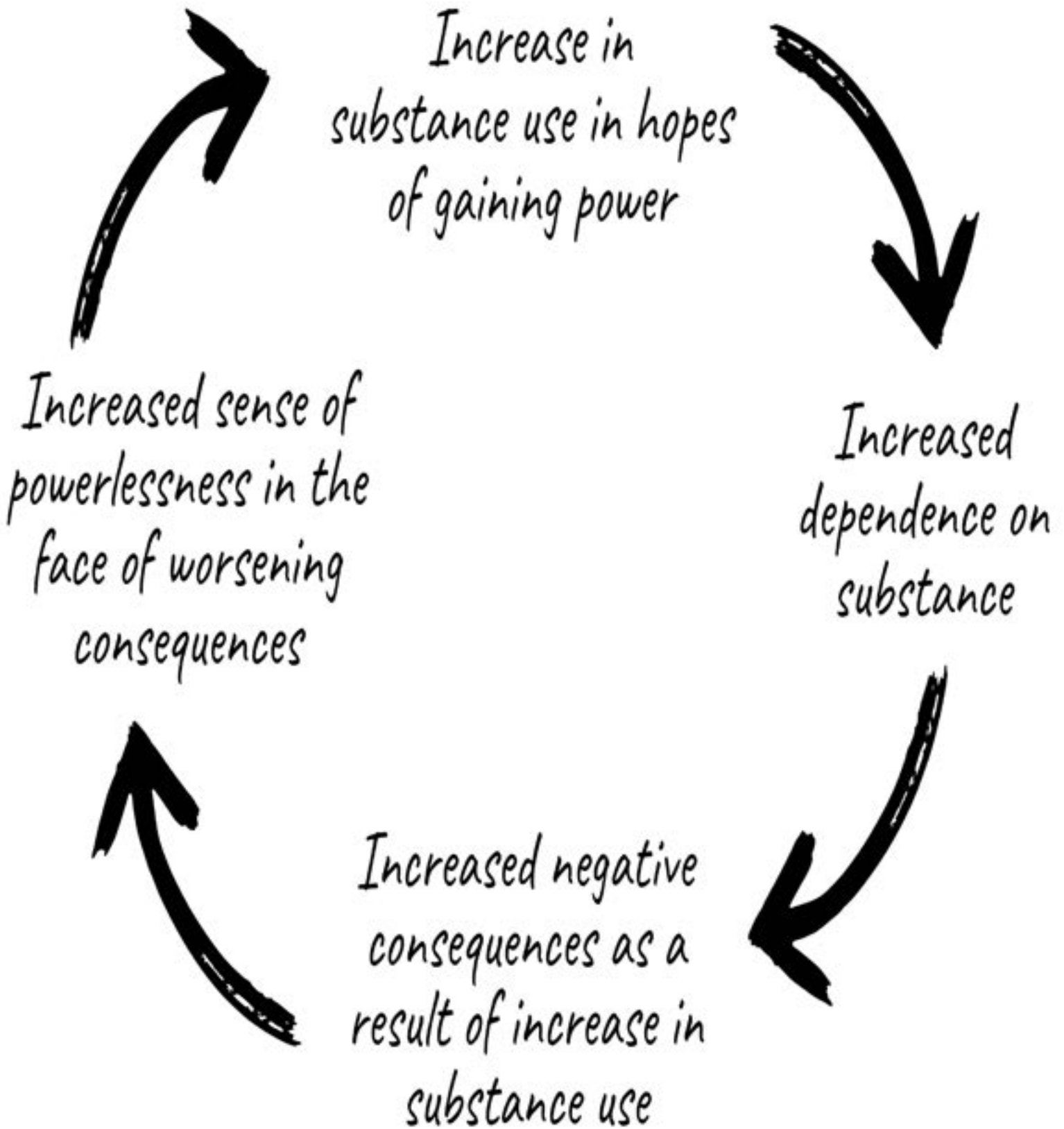
Let us never forget  
the desperation  
the despair  
the self-loathing  
the lying  
the cheating  
and the pain

Celebrate sobriety





# Cycle of Powerlessness for the Addict/Alcoholic



*"I can't do that."*

*"Why bother?"*

*"I'm not smart enough."*

*"What's the use?"*

*"I'll just fail anyway."*

*"Nothing works for me."*



**First, the Person takes a Drink.**  
**Then, the Drink takes a Drink.**  
**Then the Drink takes the Person**







**“THE MOST COMMON WAY PEOPLE  
GIVE UP THEIR POWER IS BY  
THINKING THEY DON’T HAVE ANY.”**

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**— ALICE WALKER**

# Learned Helplessness

## ■ Learned Helplessness:

- The hopelessness and passive resignation an animal or human learns when unable to avoid repeated or aversive events



## Learned Helplessness vs. Personal Control

Normally, most creatures try to escape or end a painful situation. But experience can make us lose hope.

Uncontrollable  
bad events

Experiment by Martin Seligman:  
Give a dog no chance of escape from repeated shocks.

Result: It will give up on trying to escape pain, even when it later has the option to do so.

Perceived  
lack of control

**Learned Helplessness:**  
*Declining to help oneself after repeated attempts to do so have failed.*

Generalized  
helpless behavior

**Personal Control:**  
When people are given some choices (not too many), they thrive.




# Learned Helplessness vs. Personal Control


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- People who feel helpless and oppressed often perceive control as external
- **Learned helplessness: Helpless behavior following repeated experiences that seemed to have no control.**
- In an experiment on learned helplessness, Seligman found that animals that were unable to change their situation for long periods of times seemed unable or unwilling to change when the possibility was opened to them.


**Learned Helplessness** is a psychological state of passivity and powerlessness that comes from recurrent failures to overcome stressful situations.


## Signs of Learned Helplessness

 Passivity


 Low self-esteem


 Giving up


 Lack of effort


 No motivation

## Impact of Learned Helplessness

 Fear and anxiety

 State of burnout


 No emotional healing

 Unwillingness to act









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# THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY HOPE EXPERIMENT

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During the 1950's, Dr. Curt Richter from Harvard University performed a series of experiments using water, buckets, and both domesticated and wild rats which resulted in a surprising discovery within the field of psychology. In the first experiment, Richter placed his test subjects into large buckets half filled with water with even those rats which were considered above average swimmers, giving up and dying within a few short minutes. In the second experiment, Richter pulled each rat out just as it was about to give up due to exhaustion and let them rest for a few moments. Upon inserting the rats back into the bucket of water, Richter found that the rats continued to struggle to survive for up to 60 hours as the rats now believed that if they continued to push forward with enough effort put forth, eventually they would be rescued once again. Richter recorded in his notes, "after elimination of hopelessness, the rats do not die"

**According to this result, the mice learned that the situation they experienced was not the end, and that they could get rid of it. After all, they had a reason to try harder to stay alive. Hope gave them the Willpower to keep Living...**

# OVERCOMING LEARNED HELPLESSNESS:

How to become Optimistic and  
Self-Dependent





## Treatment of Learned Helplessness

- ⚙ Cognitive behavior therapy
- ⚙ Learned optimism
- ⚙ Setting SMART goals
- ⚙ Stop self-sabotaging behavior
- ⚙ Build broken self-esteem

## Mental illnesses occurring from Learned Helplessness

- 🧑 Post-traumatic stress disorder
- 🧑 Major depression
- 🧑 Dysphoria
- 🧑 Substance abuse





Learned Helplessness is an acquired inability to overcome obstacles and avoid aversive stimuli

1. persons who are made to feel helpless in one situation are more likely to act helpless in other situations
2. Depression is marked by feelings of despondency, powerlessness, and hopelessness
3. Hope
  - some may find hope in religion, nature, human companionship, or even technology.
  - hope is among the most important of all human emotions

# LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

VERSUS

# LEARNED OPTIMISM

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TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO BE MORE OPTIMISTIC

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## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS



Feel helpless to take action with the belief that the situation is beyond their control

Use negative self-talk in the form of permanent and pervasive explanations to describe bad events

When faced with adversity, they act as pessimists and give up too soon or spiral into hopelessness

May suffer from depression, anxiety and stress. Excessive worrying can also impact their sleep and lead to poor health

## LEARNED OPTIMISM



Feel inspired to take action with the belief that they can change their situation

Use positive self-talk in the form of temporary and specific explanations to describe bad events

When faced with adversity, they act as optimists and keep pushing forward instead of ruminating about their past

Enjoy more success at work, better health, relationships and overall quality of life by engaging in constructive actions

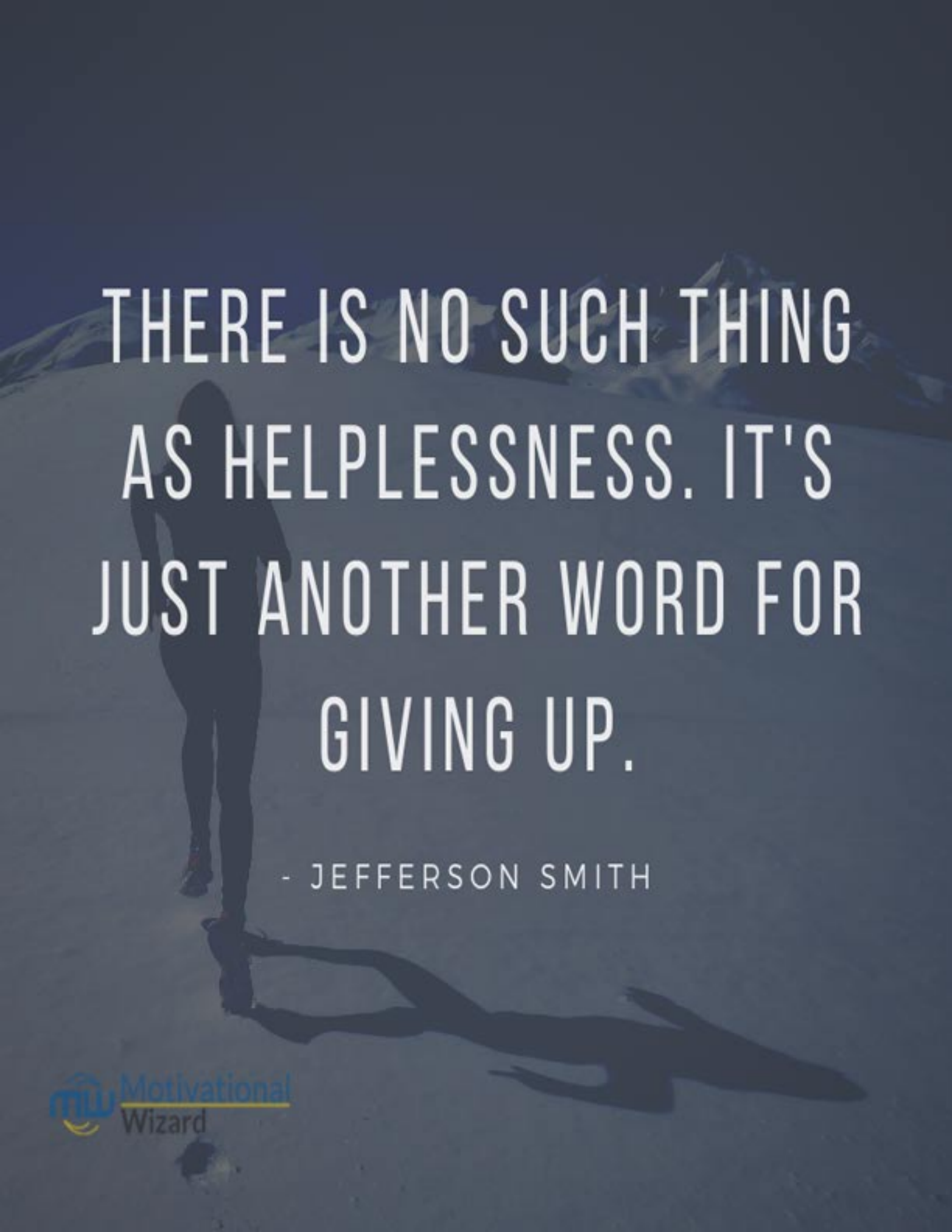


When you do nothing you feel overwhelmed and powerless. But when you get involved you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.

— *Maya Angelou* —



**I CHOOSE TO LIVE BY CHOICE NOT BY CHANCE,  
TO BE MOTIVATED NOT MANIPULATED,  
TO BE USEFUL NOT USED,  
TO MAKE CHANGE NOT EXCUSES,  
TO EXCEL NOT COMPETE.  
I CHOOSE SELF ESTEEM NOT SELF PITY.  
I CHOOSE TO LISTEN TO MY INNER VOICE,  
NOT TO LISTEN TO THE RANDOM  
OPINIONS OF OTHERS...**

A person is running on a snowy mountain slope. The person is in the foreground, slightly to the left, and their shadow is cast long on the snow. In the background, there are more snow-covered mountains under a clear sky. The overall tone is motivational and inspiring.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING  
AS HELPLESSNESS. IT'S  
JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR  
GIVING UP.

- JEFFERSON SMITH





