

## LIGHTING YOUR WAY

Life's circumstances are always changing. They are often unpredictable and foisted upon you with no warning. They are often unwanted. Sometimes they affect you so strongly you falter in the face of them. At times like these, life can entice you down some pretty dimly lit back alleys.

At first it's nice in the semi-dark. The things you don't want to see are less visible. But sometimes it can go like this: as you walk farther down into the alley, the darker it becomes, until finally there you are in the pitch black. When you get there and spend some time there for a while, you realize one thing for sure. You don't like being in the pitch black dark. Only in the darkness do you learn how much you appreciate the light in your life, and you want to get it back.

Sometimes someone comes along and finds you in the dark. They shine their light on you bright as a spotlight. Fast as the flick of a switch, your whole life is pulled out of the dark. This is wonderful, but oh-so-fragile. If something changes and that person must leave, they take their light with them. The switch goes off, and where are you?

Sometimes someone sees you in the dark, and by shining their light gently on you, your light is encouraged to shine again too. You see their brightness and feel their warmth, and your own starts to rekindle. If they too must leave, your light may flicker and dim but it will not go out. The gifts of empathy, compassion, kindness and love... gifts that, once given, last forever... started it burning again. Now you have a little flame within you to guide you.



Sometimes you realize you are sitting in the dark waiting for someone to come along. Sometimes you realize the waiting is too long and is only adding to your pain. So you look to the only person there. You. You look inside yourself and find things you forgot were there when you chose to walk into the alley. Faith, belief, courage, will and hope are all there waiting to be noticed again.

And suddenly a spark flies. In the fleeting little flash of light you see there is even more faith, more belief, more courage, more will, more hope than you ever imagined could be there. A bigger, brighter, stronger spark flies. And another. And another. So it goes until you have a flickering glow to guide you. You begin to make your way in the faint light. You grope around clumsily trying to make sense of where you are. You stumble and fall, yes. But you get up, and each time you do, your light burns stronger, steadier, more brilliantly.

This is how it becomes easier and easier to find your way out of the alley and to get to that place you are meant to be – the place where the love and life within you lights the world.

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