

Taking

AIM

Affirming

Inspiring

Motivating



Vicki D. King

Taking AIM

Taking AIM
Affirming, Inspiring, and
Motivating

By
Vicki D. King



Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.

Taking AIM is dedicated to my daughter, Joy, without whom this compilation of over four hundred affirmational, inspirational, and motivational entries would never have happened.

The entries started as simple words of encouragement to my daughter, who was going through some serious health issues. After she successfully recovered, the Lord placed it on my heart that there were others who may also be dealing with their own issues and could benefit from some words of affirmation, inspiration, and motivation.

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Where would I be without the encouragement and spiritual guidance from my Good Shepherd Baptist Church family? Thank you to my many brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thank you to my friends here in Cleveland and in states across the country. These include Florida, Texas, New York, Colorado, and California...just to name a few.

It goes without saying that I want to thank my family, here in Cleveland, Ohio but also in Troy, Michigan. I especially need to thank my husband, Bill, who had to support me even more in 2016, due to my having total knee replacement surgeries on both my knees.

I need to thank Lynn and the entire staff at Strategic Book Publishing & Rights Agency. I know you all spent countless hours poring over the six hundred plus pages of *Taking AIM*. I thoroughly appreciate how you took my initial manuscript and made it look 100% more professional.

And, last but definitely not least, I need to thank my heavenly Father for providing me with the words, verses, and strength to compile all these AIM inspirational entries into one book. Without my God, there would have been no way for me to pull together all these pages in less than one month's time.

I pray this compilation of entries is a blessing to all who may read it.

HELPING YOU TAKE “AIM”

AFFIRMING ...

INSPIRING ...

MOTIVATING ...

That’s my promise to you with this collection of inspirational blog entries! The main purpose of these blog entries is to help you take “AIM” against those negative thoughts that threaten to keep you from living the life you were meant to live.

Initially when I started creating and sending these out, there were only two recipients (my daughter and a good friend of mine). The subscribers eventually grew to over fifty. When I skipped a day of publishing and sending these inspirational blog entries, one of my subscribers would ask what happened—did they get taken off the list, and when was my next blog entry going out?

Then the Holy Spirit placed it on my mind that instead of working on my fifth romance novel, I should take some time and pull together all my AIM blog entries into a collection that readers would enjoy having at their disposal. Maybe they could even use these inspirational entries as a daily devotional, since they number more than three hundred. And even though they may have been created a couple of years ago, God’s Word never gets old or outdated.

Over the course of the two years when I published and sent the entries, I would receive many notes from subscribers saying

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how these entries really spoke to them and their individual situations.

I believe God has given me this skill to spread His Word, comfort, and encouragement.

Believe it or not, you are not alone in going through what you're going through. And we all need a boost every now and then.

These inspirational entries are meant to affirm, inspire, and motivate you.

THE LITTLE THINGS MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE

We're back at the beginning of another workweek. Boy, did that weekend go fast! But I had a fabulous weekend! My husband has a photography business, and this weekend I assisted him in taking pictures for a wedding of friends of our family. On a scale of one to ten, this wedding was a definite ten! Then, on Sunday, I attended church and the sermon was on victorious women, which I feel I am. I know that may sound boastful, but let me explain. I always try to make a point of helping others view life in a much more positive light. And by helping someone else, that in turn makes me feel better about my own situation.

One of the ways I assist people in viewing life more positively is turning their focus from what they are sure is a negative thing into something that may be more positive. I believe that if there's nothing that can be done to fix or change the negative thing, why dwell on it? Is your worrying about it going to change anything? Probably not. This brings me to my encouragement for the day.

Sometimes the little things make the biggest difference! Driving home from work today gave me an opportunity to reflect on those little things in my own life that make me smile. I turned off my radio just to focus my mind away from the news, music, commercials, etc. All that outside noise has a tendency to block your mind from thinking about what really matters. Some thoughts that came to me were how pretty the sky was today, a

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pretty light blue with the biggest, puffiest white clouds. I thought about how nice some of the lawns look in my neighborhood, so perfectly manicured. I reflected on how sweet it was to listen to the children of my church singing their praises during worship service yesterday. And this evening I thought about how great it felt to cross everything off my to-do list.

This is not to say that my workday today wasn't stressful and there was time to just sit and do nothing. My workday was extremely busy and mentally challenging. But it's that kind of day that makes it worthwhile to drive home with nothing clamoring for time in my head but God telling me to slow down and listen. You can't hear God's voice if you've got all that other stuff battling for the #1 spot.

I'm sure you can think of several things that will instantly bring a smile to your face and help you to clear away your busy day from the forefront of your mind and refocus on something a lot less stressful.

Try it. Just turn off the radio, television, or whatever. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and quiet your mind. Even if for no more than five minutes, just let your mind drift. You'll be surprised how relaxed you'll feel after that little break.

NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

Again, there are many thoughts in my head for today's entry, but this idea won out. Although, it is also coming off the death of Nora Ephron yesterday. I'm still in shock from the news. It bothers me to know that there won't be any more movies written by her in the future. The one thing that stands out to me about her is that she did what she had always wanted to do. She was good at it, exceptionally good at it.

Are you doing what you really want to do? Or are you just doing something to earn a living? I'm not knocking your need to earn a living, but you only get one time to journey through your life and you'd be wise to do what you love to do. What do you feel strongly led to accomplish? Have you prayed about it and asked God to help you find a way to fit it in? Doing something that you love to do makes life so much more worthwhile and gratifying. Wouldn't you hate to have to say, "I wish I had taken some time to do such and such?"

I've loved writing for years, over thirty years, maybe even longer. I even wrote journals when I was a young girl, though I don't know what happened to them. They probably got thrown away when I left home at eighteen to join the military. I also wrote poems while I was in the military. I still write in journals now. I have a couple of notebooks that I've been making entries in for many years. I have other notebooks in which I've written story ideas. Several of those story ideas were brought to life via my three published novels you can read about on my website.

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I've also wanted to be a teacher since way back when I was in the third grade. That goes back a really long way! I kept with that desire until just before I finished my three-year stint in the military. Unfortunately, I allowed someone to talk me out of it. That person told me that I would earn more money doing a different occupation. I may have earned more money in that new occupation, but I earnestly believe that I would've been much more content, more satisfied, if I had stayed with my original desire to become a teacher. But I did get to do some teaching, of my own children. That's another story for a possible future blog entry.

So my passions have been writing and teaching. And by doing these blog entries, I get to satisfy both desires. And that makes me happy! And who knows, maybe one day my stories will be published by a big company and they can become nationally known. Although, even if they're not nationally known, I will still be satisfied knowing that I got to accomplish what I've always wanted to do.

Now it's your turn. What have you always wanted to do? What would you do today if you didn't have to be concerned about having the necessary money to live from day to day? What is your dream vocation? There's no time like the present to try to make it happen, even if it's just on a small scale. Pray about it—you never know. Maybe it's more attainable than you thought. Besides, tomorrow is not promised to anyone. Today is your present.

Open it up and enjoy it!

GOLD CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. —2 Timothy 4:7–8 (NIV)

The London Olympics recently started this past Friday, July 27. The prior coach for the women's gymnastics team was asked what he would give as a thirty-second pep talk to the current US women's gymnastics team.

That inspired me to give you, as Christians, a thirty-second pep talk for the many trials and tribulations you may be facing in your day-to-day journey.

You will pray without ceasing!

You will be still and know that He is God!

You will run to Him because He is your strong tower!

You will know that greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world!

You will trust in Him with all your heart and not lean on your own understanding!

You will acknowledge Him, knowing that He will direct your path!

You will fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith!

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The crown handed to you at the end will not be bronze or silver!

It will be GOLD!

YOU HAVE THE POWER

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. —2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

My days at my job fly by like nobody's business. When I sit back and think about how far I have come within the past several years in terms of career growth, I am amazed. I probably would not have planned it that way, but it wasn't I who planned it. The steps that I've taken in terms of responsibility have steadily grown with each of my assignments. I really haven't had time to ascertain whether or not I was ready for something bigger. It just came. I believe sometimes you just have to do that. Don't think about whether or not you can do something. Realize who is in charge, and don't be fearful or apprehensive. Know who is really in control. Just do it!

I'm sure we all have a tendency to hold back and just wait to do this or that. I look around my office and see this tall bookshelf with two shelves of books that I really haven't touched in a couple of years. Why am I leaving them on this bookshelf? I have no idea. I was just reluctant to box them up. I thought I would use or read them, but I haven't. In the meantime, my inventory has steadily outgrown the three shelves originally assigned to it. That's a good thing. But I believe it's time to take that last step. I need to stop being fearful about really claiming all the space I can. I will live just fine without these last two shelves of "can't do without" books taking up valuable space.

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On the other side of me is a very nice closet space with probably a couple of bags' worth of clothes that could be pitched. Why haven't I gotten rid of them? I'm afraid to take that step and quit thinking that I'm going to lose weight and grow back into them. What was it that someone said to me? If I lose weight, I probably need to buy some new clothes. Besides, these items are most likely over five to ten years old. I'm being honest.

Take over your space. Take over your mind. Take charge. God didn't give you a spirit of fear, but of power. Take control of what's going on around you, especially those things that are within your power to control.

I'm sure you could probably do the same thing in your little corner of the world. You don't really need those things that you're hanging on to for dear life, do you? Think about it.

God has given you the power. It's time you used it!

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. —James 1:2–4 (KJV)

“Lord, give me patience and give it to me right now!” I’m sure you’ve heard that before.

To borrow a phrase from another profession, “Sometimes teachers make the worst students.” Most times, I have no problem following my own advice to others. But there are some rare instances when my own trials and tribulations hit too close to home and, all of a sudden, all my good advice to others just blows right past me.

These are the times when I’m truly proud of the fact that my advice is being followed, but maybe not quite as proud when it’s being directed right back at me.

I am currently experiencing a rather prolonged injury that I encountered at choir practice, believe it or not.

My times outside of my nine-to-five job are extremely busy but amazingly fulfilling. That wasn’t necessarily so a few months ago. I enjoy and get immense pleasure from the extracurricular activities that I’m involved in.

Now this injury is threatening to interfere with my being able to do all those fun, worthwhile activities, and I’m not really

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happy about that. I so want this injury to go away quickly so I can continue doing all that I love to do.

But I need to be patient and just be satisfied in doing what I'm physically still able to do, and not fret unnecessarily over those activities that may be put on a temporary hold.

I am not happy about that, but I need to show patience, take my own advice, and just be thankful my injury isn't worse.

Patience is a virtue that I—as well as you, my readers—must learn.

GOD'S MY REFUGE

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. — Psalm 61:2 (KJV)

And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. —Psalm 78:35 (KJV)

But the Lord is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge. —Psalm 94:22 (KJV)

Securing a balanced life is so very important nowadays. So many things are clamoring for our undivided attention. They basically fall into five categories, listed here in no particular order:

- Work
- Family
- Health
- Friends
- Integrity

If you are unlucky, you could work for a manager whose own life is out of balance and who believes your whole life should also center on your job.

Or you could be unlucky and have the type of family you never hear from unless they want or need something from you.

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Or you may be at that stage in life when, every time you turn around, something is going wrong with your body.

Or your friends may want to write you off because you don't call them as much as you used to.

Or, last but definitely not least, you may feel you have to sacrifice your integrity to get a break or get ahead today.

Well, let me tell you: the secret to a "balanced" life is having God as your rock. And He will be, if you merely let Him in your heart.

Go to Him when you are having problems on the job.

Go to Him when you are having issues with your family.

Go to Him when your health is challenging you.

Go to Him when your friends want to write you off.

Go to Him when you have questions about what path you should take in issues of integrity.

God is your rock and your refuge!

CELEBRATE YOUR YOUTH

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. —1 Timothy 4:12 (KJV)

“You shouldn’t be so driven to get that management position right now. I didn’t get the position until I was at least thirty years old. You’re barely twenty-[fill in the exact age here]. You have plenty of time.”

As a young person, how many times have you heard that refrain? Just because it took the other person a longer time to get to that point in his or her career, should you be penalized? Is that your fault that it took the person a while to get it? I think not!

There are too many young people out in the world today excelling because they’re going for it!

Look at the fifteen-year-old female swimmer from the United States who won a gold medal. Thank goodness no one told her to wait a few years to try to realize her dream.

Believe me, if the other person could’ve gotten the management position at an earlier age, he or she definitely would not have turned it down.

You have drive, ambition, perseverance, and initiative at a young age. Congratulations! That’s commendable!

Keep up the good work. Keep pushing. Your realized goal is just around the corner!

HIS WORD IN YOUR HEART

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. —Psalm 119:11 (KJV)

I wondered what words of wisdom I would impart on you, my readers, today. I thought long and hard. Then the Holy Spirit laid on my heart that my readers don't need a word from me. They need a word directly from God's Word. We often try to find the best book of inspirational poetry or sayings that can inspire us to keep going from day to day. Today I am going to offer you some strong verses from the Bible. Maybe you can discover a new favorite among them. You never know when you might need one of them to help you get through a rough day at work. Or maybe you're having health issues and you need to remember from where your strength comes. Or you may be feeling lost and alone and you just need to remember that God is always there, a very present help.

So here goes . . .

Psalm 40:1–3—I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.

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Psalm 34:1—I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Isaiah 26:3—Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

Psalm 27:14—Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait I say, on the Lord.

Psalm 27:1—The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 55:22—Cast thy burdens upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Psalm 61:3—For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

Psalm 91:11—For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Psalm 119:105—Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Okay, so do you have a new favorite now? Try writing these down on an index card, put them in an envelope, and draw from that envelope, one every day for the next ten days. These verses will be there to provide you with strength for your daily journey.

RIGHT ON TIME: PART ONE

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. —Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 (KJV)

God places the right people in the right place at the right time. One of my daughter's favorite sayings is, "Everything happens for a reason."

These are two excellent, true statements, although skeptics would say it's lucky or coincidental that certain things or events happen. I don't believe in either luck or coincidence. I believe in God unequivocally!

So, because both of these sayings are really true to me and so good, I'm going to do a two-part blog, speaking on my daughter's saying today and on mine tomorrow.

"Everything happens for a reason." Although I generally like to focus on the direct blessings in my life or, rather, the good things

that happen in my life, if it weren't for the "bad" events that have occurred, I may not have been able to appreciate certain blessings.

One of the really bad events that has happened in my life in just the past year was losing my job at the end of 2011. It was a contract position but definitely a good position nonetheless. And losing it right before Christmas hurt. Just knowing I would start the year off without a job really rocked my confidence. All I kept thinking was that this had caught me off guard, but I somehow knew that it didn't catch God off guard. I know He wasn't up there thinking, "I didn't see that coming."

That's when one of my favorite verses (Proverbs 3:5-6) kept me going from day to day: **Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not on thy own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy path.**

There were many good things that arose from losing my position, and I believe I spoke on one of them before. But the other good thing that came from that bad event was getting my own Avon business, meeting wonderful people who became my loyal customers, and teaming up with my daughter in her booming gift basket business.

If I had not lost my position, I probably would not have even considered starting my own business. I didn't think I needed to do anything like that. Now not only do I have my original position back with the same company as before (what a blessing!), but I also have an Avon business that I am extremely pleased with. And I am able to make great use of my daughter's organizing, marketing, and selling skills.

So, as my daughter says, everything happens for a reason.

Trust the Lord to get you through whatever trials and tribulations come your way. And just remember that even when you are going through some stiff turbulence, trust God to right your plane and send you soaring into the future, even higher than before you hit the minor disturbance.

RIGHT ON TIME: PART TWO

See Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 (KJV), as in yesterday’s entry.

God places the right people in the right place at the right time!

This is part two of the blog published yesterday, August 7, and the above is one of my favorite sayings. I wholeheartedly believe it to be 100 percent true. I have had too many instances in my life that have proven it to think otherwise. I don’t believe in coincidences or being lucky. God knows exactly what I need, when I need it.

There was an instance at my job when discussions got a little heated, with strong differences of opinion between two of my coworkers. I was relatively new and didn’t really want this incident to interfere with the good reputation I was hoping to build with the manager in question. I needed to speak with her away from her cubicle and away from other coworkers. And who did I see as I was heading out of my area and on my way up to the second floor but the manager I wanted to speak with. I was able to voice my concerns away from other workers and was also able to clear the air without worrying about others being privy to our conversation.

One time, I was in my company’s kitchen/breakroom and realized that I had forgotten to bring tea bags from home. This kitchen generally had extra tea bags for the employees, but not on this day. Lo and behold, another of my coworkers heard me

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inquiring about tea bags and offered me one of his English specialty tea bags. These were the really nice tea bags. He went to his desk and returned with not just one but several tea bags. Needless to say, I was a happy camper.

There were a couple of times when I was entering the building with my arms full and wondering how I was going to work my key fob and open the door. Well, just yesterday I had a medium-size gift basket (with glasses in it), plus my purse, lunch box, and computer book bag. Two of my coworkers just happened to be outside on their break and saw me walking toward them, and they offered to help me.

Another time, I had just finished heating my lunch and was trying to carry that plus my lunch box, purse, etc., back through the security door to my cubicle. Another coworker was on her way out of the office area right on time to open the door for me, allowing me to enter.

I have a really special friend with whom I always seem to be playing phone tag, but when I am really stressed about something, somehow God makes a way for the two of us to get together, either by phone or in person.

And finally, I am on the announcement committee at my church, and I've always wanted to give an encouraging message that is in line with the day's current events (elections, holidays, etc.). I had already finished my encouraging words for the upcoming Sunday and my next Sunday. It just so happened that I was watching the Olympics and listened to the ex-coach for the women's gymnastics team give an interview, just prior to taking a shower. While I was in the shower, the Holy Spirit was filling my head with all sorts of ideas about what I could do for an encouraging word relating to the Olympics in London. There were so many ideas swirling around in my head that I could barely write them down fast enough when I got out of

