

Berry Beary Kind –Book 8

*In a very kind town called, “Berry Beary Town”
Lived a very kind Bear called, “Berry Beary Kind”*

*Imagine a place where fun things happen every day;
Where everybody is happy and helping each other;
A place that is safe, pleasant and welcoming to all;
Where everyone is friendly and has what they need;
A place where new and interesting ideas and solutions can be tried.
...Perhaps, if we all do more than imagine, this dream can become a reality.*

87--The Adventures of Teddy—A Very Strong Bear

Teddy wasn't always a strong bear, but he had learned some tricks and tips that made him so. And bit by bit he gained more strength than most others around him.

Here's how he did it.

Story 1

One night Teddy was feeling oh so very tired, but he still had the dishes to wash, the cooking to prepare for the next day's first meal, and he really wanted to take a short walk before going to bed.

He loved looking at the stars and smelling the fresh night time air.

“I know what I'll do,” he resolved. “First I'll take the walk, as that will inspire me and refresh me.”

And so that is what he did. It would have worked and given him the strength to do all the other things left on his list, if something mysterious hadn't happened to him that changed everything for him.

As he was walking across his own backyard to reach the fence that led to the larger pasture, a certain something zoomed around him. A light dancing of some sort.

“I guess the stars have come to say goodnight to me,” he half joked. It was only half a joke because that is exactly what it looked like.

Then, before too long he felt himself lifting up and up, as this starry light zoomed around him. He almost felt dizzy, and certainly felt lightweight. He flew up and over the fence and finally landed on a little mound. He plopped down with a light thud.

“How did I get here? What was that?” was all he could say before lying down to look up at the stars. They certainly were a beautiful sight on this warm and peaceful night. And that is the last thing he remembered, for he slept right there on the green grassy hill.

He never did get to all the other things on his list—that night. But he sure got a wonderful and early night’s rest. The feeling of strength he had was terrific, as he woke even before the sun poked its head up all the way.

“I feel I could run!” he said aloud, and so he did.

Feeling then even better, he got a good start on all the things he wanted to have done before the day was over.

“Maybe it was better that I took that starry ride and slept soundly early on in the night,” he thought, after the dishes were washed and the breakfast was cooked.

“I didn’t really need to stay up late to get it all done, as that would take my strength away. What I needed was a good peaceful and early night’s rest looking into the stars. I also needed some good exercise, and a fresh early start on the day. I think I’ll try that again tonight.”

And that was the start when Teddy the Very Strong Bear did begin to get stronger. He was much stronger than the other bears he lived around.

They often were so surprised how he could do much each day, and still feel energetic. He had a secret as to why this was.

“Dancing and flying with the stars at the end of the day,” was one secret he learned. As well as getting a good night’s rest.

88--Story 2

Teddy knew what he must do, and it wasn’t going to be easy. First, he shut the fridge and stopped snacking. Even that was hard. But the next thing required much more strength. A new kind of strength. He had to have a strong will to carry out his father’s instructions, for it was actually something he very much disliked to do.

“It’s trash day tomorrow,” his father had said. Teddy knew this meant that he was to go around and collect rubbish from all the bins around the house, as well as bits of scraps and torn this’s and that’s from the backyard. It was time for some serious clean up.

It’s not that Teddy liked things to be messy or dirty, for that was certainly not the case. Teddy loved things to be fresh smelling and to look clean and tidy. But taking time away from doing what he’d much rather do, that is what was hard.

“This is harder than putting on my shoes when the lace is still tied,” he thought. But that gave him an idea.

“Maybe if I get moving quickly, as if I’m having a race with an imaginary neighbouring bear, then I’ll get the job done quickly.”

It was a good idea, and Teddy found that the job didn't take so long and wasn't so bad after all. He just focused on the clock and tried to get things cleaned up before too much time had passed.

"Wow!" said his father, when he saw what Teddy did, and how quickly he did it, too. "Aren't you grown up today!"

And indeed he was. For it's grown up to do things that aren't your favourite, just so you can be a help to others—or even a help to yourself.

When Teddy sat to eat his meal that evening, he sat up tall and fine and had a great big smile on his face.

"My, aren't you looking glad tonight," Teddy's mother said. She knew it wasn't because of the meal, as it wasn't one of Teddy's top most favourite ones. There was something on his mind that was making him real glad just then.

When father spoke, then mother knew why he was feeling great.

"Teddy took care of all the trash this afternoon, and he did it faster than he's ever done it before. I'm just so glad to have such a helpful son as he," Teddy's father said.

Teddy smiled even bigger than he already was. It just made him feel so grown up to do a job and do it well, and not let the job take away his joy.

When Teddy was washing his dish for the night he thought:

"I'm stronger today than I was yesterday, because I didn't let my feelings stop me from doing what I was meant to do."

And it was true.

89--Story 3

"Rrrr!" Teddy was trying to pull a very tight weed in his garden patch. Teddy always liked to keep his garden free of weeds.

"I must have missed seeing this weed for quite some time," Teddy thought.

"It would not have had a chance to grow its roots down so deeply if I had seen it earlier. I'll have to keep a better watch over the plants from now on. This sure is tough!"

Teddy kept digging down deeper and pulled on it some more, and eventually the long-rooted weed was removed.

"That sure feels good now!" he thought, as he smoothed over the soil and proceeded to water his garden patch.

"Well," Teddy thought, "one good thing is that when a weed is pulled out it has stirred up the soil so that the water can sink down into it more deeply. So, I guess it's good to have to pull a few out every now."

Teddy was also glad for the strength it gave him, working to dig out weeds and keep the soil well cared for. Bringing over the buckets of water also helped to make him stronger. He had to haul the water out of the well, and that wasn't easy. Then he had to carry it over to his well-cared for garden.

"I think gardening is making me stronger each day," Teddy thought, as he hung up his gardening gloves, and placed the tools where they went.

That night as he slept, Teddy had a dream. In his dream everything was perfect. There was no trash to take away, no weeds to pull, and dishes were never dirty. No one ever asked him to do anything, so he could just sleep all day or night if he wished to. There were no hills to climb either. In fact, he seemed to be walking slightly downhill very easily everywhere he went—although he seldom did walk anywhere.

However, when Teddy the very strong bear woke up the next morning from this dream, he had an awful sensation.

"Oh, I feel so, so weak!" he thought. "I just feel like I can hardly move any part of my body. I feel like I can't do anything for anyone today."

Then he remembered what had happened in his dream. Or more like what had not happened. For nothing ever happened. Everything was in a bit of a lull, and in the dream he got weaker and weaker until he could just not move at all. There was nothing to build up his strength on.

When he realised that these feelings he now had were just a reminder of the dream, and not actually the way he was, he quickly sat up.

"I best be getting on with the day now! If I want to stay very strong I need to keep using the strength I have, and even try to do things that are a bit harder today than what I did yesterday!"

And this was one more secret he had discovered to being strong.

"I think, instead of cleaning only one room today at clean-up time, I'll do two! And I'll time myself to make sure I'm using all my strength, and not just lulling around."

Up he went out of bed.

"But I'll need to start with a good-sized breakfast," he thought. So mother gave him a bit more pineapple and pear pie than usual, because he had put his mind to doing extra work that day and gaining extra strength.

"Ummm!" Teddy thought as he finished his special breakfast. "I think I like being strong!"

Of course, he wasn't talking about the food, for that would do little to build his muscles if all he did was sit around eating. He knew it was the action he'd take that would help him maintain and add to the strength he had.

90--Story 4

“Ooh, this is tough!” thought Tedward, the tough-hearted bear. He had been trying to get on his shoes for some time. But it just was not working. When Teddy the Very Strong Bear noticed his struggling brother bear, he stopped to help.

When the job was done and the shoes were tied, Tedward said to Teddy, “How can you do it so easily? It’s so hard for me.”

Teddy just smiled. It wasn’t always easy for him. He remembered the things that were just as hard for him before. That is until he had tried to do them again and again, and didn’t give up.

At last he said to young Tedward, “You see, I just had to keep trying. Eventually my fingers gained more skill and more strength, too.”

Teddy noticed the look on Tedward’s face. Perhaps he had been hoping for something that would suddenly make it easy for him to put on his shoes. Thinking about doing difficult things again and again until he was able to do them well, seemed like unpleasant and hard work.

Teddy took Tedward by the hand and led him out to the garden for some fresh air and sunshine.

“You see this tree,” Teddy pointed out, “it’s been growing for a long while.”

Tedward noticed how big and strong it was, and the bark around it was tough too.

Teddy then showed Tedward some of the roots that could be seen up above the ground. It was a very old tree.

Teddy said, “The first thing a tree does—or any seed—is begin to grow roots. The roots go down. It does that before it does the hard job of growing up and up and having to stand tall and straight.”

Tedward spoke out, “So I’ll first learn to do the easier things, and then I’ll be strong enough to do what is harder?”

Teddy nodded yes, then continued teaching what he could, using the tree as an example.

“The tree has to fight against gravity, the force that pulls all things down again to ground. And it has to stay strong even if there is wind blowing on it. But that just makes it get stronger faster.”

Tedward asked, “Is that like when I need to something hard that I’m not ready yet for, but it helps me to learn to do it—like putting on my shoes and lacing them up?”

“Yes. But I can help you still, as you keep trying. You won’t always need to do it on your own just yet. Just keep trying a bit each day, and then I can help you when it’s still too hard,” Teddy offered.

Tedward was glad to hear this. He would do the best that he could, but the help of his strong brother Teddy would be there for him when he needed it.

“I’m glad I did what was hard when I was young,” Teddy thought, “Now I can help someone else start to get stronger each day, and that makes me glad.”

91--Story 5

“Ahh-wow-great!” Teddy exclaimed as his kite soared higher in the sky. It was a semi-cloudy day, with lovely rays of sunshine beaming down. The wind was just perfect for kite-flying.

He held the string of his red and white polka-dotted kite that his great uncle had sewn for him. It was good to see it flying up higher and higher as the moments went by.

“I’d better hold on tightly now. Don’t want the wind to take it up and away. It’s blowing stronger, I think. Sometimes strength is a good thing, most of the time perhaps. But strong wind that is out of hand can bring a lot of things down,” Teddy mused, looking up into the sky.

“Yes, I think I’ll add that thought to my ‘Getting Stronger’ book of tips. It’s no good being strong if you are just doing as you wish, like the wind will do with my kite if I don’t hold on to it mighty tight. But strength that is used for lifting up, rather than for knocking down, is the best kind.”

Teddy’s dad came by and asked, “Can I have a go?”

It was perfect timing, as just then Teddy was needing a break. His fingers were feeling the tension and he was worried he’d lose the kite.

“Sometimes it takes more than one pair of hands to be strong enough to do certain tasks,” Teddy’s father said as he took over for a bit.

“That is to say, shared strength can be twice as strong.”

Together they could do what one of them alone couldn’t do so well.

Teddy got a drink of water and took a picture of the kite high in the air that his dad was holding firmly. It was good to have each other. When one might have failed for lack of strength, another one could lend a helping hand.

Teddy jotted his “Getting stronger” thoughts in his notebook and made his way over again to the field. But before he reached it, he saw his mother trying to lift something that was far too hard for her.

“Oh, Teddy, you strong bear, you are just who I was hoping to see right about now,” his mother said.

“Well, isn’t that great? While Dad was helping me, now I have a moment to lend a strong hand to help you. Isn’t that perfect,” Teddy spoke, while doing just that.

“Thank you so much, Teddy,” his mother said and placed a kiss of gratitude on his cheek.

“Can I come with you, Teddy?” Tedward’s voice was heard. He ran then to catch up and hold his big brother’s hand.

Teddy noticed something in Tedward’s other hand—a kite!

“Papa said he’d help me to get it up in the air,” Tedward said with a smile.

Yes, it was good they had each other. They needed each other. Together they could be stronger and get more done than if they were all on their own.

92--Story 6

Teddy was all set to run a race. This was the first he'd been in, that would be as long or as hard as this one was to be.

Teddy had to do things differently for awhile, to give his body the time to get fully in shape.

He no longer started the day with breakfast, but with training and morning exercise. He ate some time later on.

He didn't end the day with the biggest meal he could manage, but ate lighter and very healthy meals earlier in the evening. This made him wake up more lively and less groggy.

And of course he always had to get an early night's sleep if he wanted to keep to his training program. If others offered to do this and that with him late into the night, he had to choose, and keep choosing what was the most important thing. Usually he made the right choice.

"It's either play that late-night game and quite possibly lose the race, or go to bed early and win." This was what he'd think when offers were made.

"If I do everything others are wishing, instead of sticking to my training program, I'll never reach the goal of being fit enough for the race that is starting quite soon."

It was hard to tell others that his time needed to be used differently now as he was in training. Some people understood, as they too had goals that they wished to reach. But others didn't understand and felt sad and missed Teddy being there with them as much as he had been with them before.

But Teddy did promise them, "I'll catch up on fun times with you later on, okay? When the race is done and I've done the best I can to be a winner, then we can have some times of relaxation."

This helped give hope to both Teddy and his friends, that it wouldn't be forever that they couldn't be together doing all the fun activities they wished they could do. The race was set for a certain time, and Teddy only had a certain amount of time to prepare for it. So the race and training for it must have his focus.

Of course, he could choose to just not race at all, but that wouldn't make him stronger. And that was his life-long goal—to get stronger and more skilled each day.

When the day of the race came, Teddy looked over his chart. He had marked what days he stuck to his training, and what days he didn't. He was glad to see that most days, nearly all in fact, he had done what he knew to do to get as strong as he could.

It didn't matter to him, or to his family, if he came in first in the race. To him what mattered most was that he had already won the first contest—working out day by day to get stronger. He won that struggle. He hadn't given in and given up. He had worked hard every day until the final day. He had won in the hardest test of all, already. Now would be the fun part, though hard in its own way. But now he could just run and do the best he could, and he knew the race wouldn't be all that long. He had done the best he could to have the strength to race.

He put on his running shoes and was eager to go! He put every bit of effort he could into running!

With a beaming smile he then at last crossed the finish line! He'd made very good timing, and he knew it wasn't just because he was running his fastest, but because he had trained for all that time to make his best even better; to make his fastest even faster. And it worked! He made it among the winning runners.

93--Story 7

"Yawn! Stretch!" Teddy felt he just had to get out of bed, but it was hard.

He looked down at his bandaged up foot. It was still bleeding somewhat. He'd have to use a crutch to get around. And boy, was he tired.

It wasn't a bad situation that caused this hurt, but something rather fun.

"Why is it that fun things end in hurt?" he thought.

But what hurt even more were the thoughts he was being bowled with, "How are you going to be strong now. You'll turn into a toothpick and just break. Look at you. You can't even take a step unaided..."

Ouch! Those thoughts hurt worse than the cut he had and the sprain of his ankle.

He'd been playing a game in the dark woods, running here and there late into the night. One of those night games he often was invited to play. But now it was time he rest. He was too hurt and tired to do must else.

"How can rest help me to feel stronger?" Teddy asked his mother who came in to see him.

His dear mother looked rather tired. She had been so concerned about him while he was away playing in the dark with those little lights that looked like candles, but weren't really. Then after his accident she stayed awake longer tending to his cut, and trying to make him feel better. At last she had gone to sleep, when Teddy finally had. It seemed it was nearly the wee hours of the morning by that time.

"Well darling. I guess you are learning what things make you strong and what don't. But I'll tell you a secret that I learned." Teddy was ready to hear a secret. His mother was a strong bear in many ways, and perhaps she could help him out now.

His mother continued, "No matter what you are doing, or even when you can't do anything at all, there is always something you can be getting stronger in—although it might not be in the way you hoped. So, as you lie here thinking things over, maybe there's a different kind of strength that it will give you.

"Will you have more strength to say 'no' to your friend's offers for playing in the dark, the next time they ask you to come and join them? —Especially when it's time to be doing other things?"

That got Teddy thinking. Maybe his body would feel weaker, at least today and in the coming week. But his will power would be stronger, and that just might help him in the future.

A week later:

"Hello my strong bear," the voice of Teddy's father boomed into the room where Teddy was quietly reading a book.

Teddy looked up. He wondered if his dad was joking, because he felt he wasn't strong like he used to be. But his father was taking about a new kind of strength.

"Your mother said you wrote a letter to your friends telling them all that you have learned in this time of rest, and saying how you weren't sure about continuing with the late-night games in the future."

Teddy nodded. He'd told his mother about his letter, and both his parents were pleased.

His father continued, "That is a type of strength that few have. The strength to say 'no' to some things, if saying 'no' might lose the approval of their friends. So many people want everyone else to think well of them that they completely miss doing things that actually are the best, and worth admiring. But I'm glad to see you have had the strength to make a wise and better choice. And so tonight we are going to celebrate!"

Teddy smiled as his dad complimented him for showing this new type of strength.

And that night the family sang songs, played games in the sitting room together, and ate Teddy's favourite snack to celebrate.

Teddy felt so much better in his heart, that even his ankle started to heal more quickly.

Soon he was able to walk normally, and before too long even go on a hike on a nearby mountain trail.

He got stronger in body every day, and so did his strength to say 'no' to whatever would weaken him, no matter what others thought of him or said about him. Since they didn't feel the pain that Teddy did, it was no longer others who would have the final say in what Teddy did or didn't do.

He'd choose to make wise and careful choices that would make him and his family the happiest.

94--Story 8

In preparation for the afternoon's special activity, Teddy and his younger brother Tedward had gathered and made all kinds of airplanes and flying vehicles. There were several paper and cloth airplanes, and various flying vehicle toys made of various things, and in all sorts of shapes.

Teddy and Tedward had also rigged up an "airplane training" rope. It was a rope strung across a part of their yard. The rope's height could be changed according to the player's wishes.

When all was ready, and the visiting young people were there, the game was explained.

"This is a game to strengthen our arms and make us more skilled at flying the planes higher and higher. Each time we get all the planes over the rope successfully, then we'll make the rope go up a bit higher." Teddy said to the those who were joining in.

"On your marks! Get set! Go!" Teddy called out, as all sorts of flying vehicles zoomed through the air, up and over the rope. Most made it, but a few didn't. The vehicles that constantly never made it over, were placed to the side as unsuitable for this game.

"Hurray!" called out Teddy, as at last all flying planes made it over the highest level of the rope!

"Now, let's celebrate with some watermelon and a glass of chilled juice," Teddy said to the young participants.

Their arms needed a rest. They'd used them vigorously and had finished the game well.

As they sat resting, Teddy told them a story called, "The Final Flight".

It told of an old airplane, that though it had to keep getting fixed up, it continued to be used again and again for many exciting missions. At last it landed in a glorious land, and became the object of admiration for all those who looked on it.

This plane had flown longer and for many more years than most planes around. It had done well, those in that land and were so glad to get to see it. At last it had come to its rest, and was admired by many for its flights and the help it gave to many all around.

Everyone enjoyed the story, and then those who were visiting thanked Teddy and Tedward for the pleasant time they'd had, and returned to their homes.

When Teddy watched the sunset that evening, he thought about the "arm strengthening" game of the day.

"I guess it's good to keep working at something in order to get stronger and to be able to do it better, even if it takes a whole lot of tries." This is just what they'd needed to do to get all the planes over the rope.

This tip would help him the next day as he was learning to bike up hill. That took a whole lot of strength—but strength that could only be gained by trying it repeatedly, and working on it many times.

"Strength doesn't always come in one shot, but by patiently working at something, and it builds up bit by bit, through persistence."

This is what Teddy wrote in his "Getting Stronger" notebook, before turning out the light for some strengthening rest.

95--Story 9

Teddy was using the can opener. He was making some soup to feed his sick mother. He added some ingredients to the pot and had gotten them quite hot. Now was the time to add the canned veggies that would save him time. Mother would get the soup sooner if he used them, rather than cutting up more fresh ones, this time.

However, the can opener got stuck and just wouldn't finish the job. It wasn't the first time this had happened.

"Hmmm, at a time like now, this really isn't the time for it to not work right," Teddy thought.

He did want to bring the soup to his mother as soon as he could.

Teddy continued to muse on the situation, and said aloud:

"It doesn't matter how very strong my hands might be, they can't open the metal lid. A tool is needed for it. I need more than my hands to be strong; I need a tool that works and is also strong."

His father walked in and added: "And you need to know how to use the tool right as well. I think the can opener wasn't used properly, and now it won't work right. It was being used by someone as a sort of hammer, because they didn't want to take the time to find a real hammer. It's a bit out of shape now."

Father had a little can opener on his handy fold-up pocket tool kit.

“Let’s use this for now, until we can get the real one back into shape and working for us the right way,” Teddy’s father offered.

It took more time, and the cut was rather jagged, not smooth like the right tool would have done if it was used in the right way.

At last the can was open, and soon after the soup was finished.

“Thank you, darling,” mother said to Teddy when he brought it to her. “I guess I need a bit of time to be strengthened in new ways.”

Teddy wondered what ways his mother might need to gain strength in.

She answered the question his eyes showed.

“I think I need to be faster with thinking about the good things, rather than imagining what unpleasant things could go wrong. Having a well-controlled and strong mind is one of the best tools you’ll ever have.”

When Teddy heard his mother talk about a tool, and using it in the right way, he remembered about the can opener, and told her the story.

Mother smiled. She knew now that the strength of thoughts used in the right way certainly would help her to work more quickly, and say things more smoothly—like a good and not bent-out-of-shape can opener.

When Teddy picked up his notebook that night he wrote in it the next tip for being strong:

“Use my mind for good things, so it stays in shape and can work quickly when people are depending on me.”

96--Story 10

Teddy was out fishing with his father and a few of his friends. They were gone on a few day’s trip to the woods, and to the nearby lake. They would camp out at night under the stars, and fish most of the day.

It was great being out in nature, though it wasn’t always picture perfect. There were some things that Teddy did wish hadn’t happened. There was the time when he stepped out of the boat too soon and his leg slipped into the water and got wet.

Though his pants were able to get dried out by the fire, still he felt a bit cold for a while until they were dry. And once when a very nice-looking fish was on his fishing pole, just then the fishing line snapped, and back into the water went the fish.

Of course, there were always mosquitos to buzz around and bother them, along with the flies that were fast at detecting anytime they started to prepare and cook the fish for their meal. Some parts of the day felt too hot and other times it felt a bit too cold. There also was the time he tripped over a fallen branch and down he went, getting a bit scraped up on some rocks.

However, these few things that weren't perfectly to Teddy's liking were making him stronger at being glad for the good and not grumbling about the imperfections.

The second day of their camping and fishing adventure Teddy was already getting better at playing the "What's Good is Better" game. Anytime something unpleasant showed itself, Teddy would think of at least three other things that were good, and much better than whatever the present trouble was.

As Teddy ate his freshly roasted fish by the fire on the second night, he was feeling pretty happy. It's not that everything went perfectly that day, but it was because he had learned to smile anyway, no matter what.

"I think my smile is getting stronger," he thought. "I can use it in nearly any situation. I don't get to practice that when things only go perfectly well. It's only something that can be practiced when things are a bit hard to manage."

By the end of the third day they all felt very skilled at setting up camp, building and putting out fires, boating, and using the fishing gear. They felt healthier too, for the fresh air and living out doors was invigorating.

"I think I'm stronger in health too," Teddy said, as they packed up their camp and headed for home.

"Yes, I think we all are stronger in one way or another," father said. "I'm glad we went on this challenging adventure. It wasn't always easy, but it was very good in so many ways.

Teddy agreed. It was good to have opportunities to learn new skills and to get stronger in health. He was glad to learn to smile anyway, even when things didn't go according to his wishes. He would return now certainly stronger.

97--Story 11

Teddy was combing out the fur on his head. He liked for it to be shiny and clean looking, and tidy without tangles. He was finding all sorts of things in his fur. Little bits of nature had stuck to him after his romp around in the grass during a playful time outdoors.

"There," Teddy said. "I think I got the last burr out of my fur. Now I'm all tidy and nice."

He checked the mirror to see if all was looking good. A smile on his face was the last nice thing to be added.

"Ready to go?" his mother asked, and standing by her was young Tedward his brother, as well as his father.

"Yes, I'm ready now. Let's go!" Teddy said, and off they went out the door.

They were having a family walk along the beach at sunset time, and would end with a pleasant meal in a friend's fishing boat that was tied to the pier. He would cook up some of the fish he got the night before, and decorate his boat with pretty lights. Music would be playing, and it would be a nice evening together.

Well, that is what they thought was going to happen. It's easy to be smiling when looking and feeling good, walking in a lovely sunset and about to do something you are eager to do with friends.

However, things didn't go as planned, and that was a test of strength for sure—the kind of strength that can adapt to changes, give up hopes, and not get too worried about it. Also strength that can jump in and help others, rather than enjoying a bit of peace and quiet and relaxation.

Here's what happened. As they neared the boat they noticed there was a bit too much smoke for someone who was just cooking a bit of supper.

"Something's not right," father said and sped up his walking to a run to find out what was going on, and if help was needed.

When they climbed aboard the boat, their friend was nowhere to be found. The boat would soon be catching fire from the lack of attention on the food that was cooking—or more like that was now burning.

"Where is Marvin?" Teddy's father wondered.

Just then he heard a call coming from the water. It was Marvin down in the water, trying very hard to find a way to climb back in to the boat.

Quickly Teddy let down a rope that was for this purpose of assisting people out of the water. Up Marvin climbed at last, rescued by his friends.

When Marvin had a towel around him, and mother was tending to the cooking needs, he told them what had happened. Somehow he'd tripped on a rope and had fallen overboard, when in the middle of cooking. Then he got a bit tangled in some of the fishing nets and so couldn't get easily out and away.

"Well, it's a good thing that we came when we did. And I think we'll get things all fixed up just as we planned," Teddy's mother encouraged. She'd found some more fish in a box of ice and had begun cooking it.

Teddy found the string of lights that were to be hung up and got to work decorating things. Tedward sat and kept a still-warming-up Marvin company while he listened to tales of fishing adventures. Father sat and listened part of the time, and then helped to set up the table for their meal.

Eventually all was at peace again, and they'd learned something good that evening.

Here's what Teddy wrote about it in his "Getting Stronger" notebook of ideas:

"When doing something special, even if you think you have all the skills and tools needed to do the job alone, sometimes it's better to work with others, just in case things do go wrong. No matter how strong you are, if there is an accident, you'll need help, and it's good to have someone around to help out. It's better to have someone nearby to call out to for help, no matter how brave, strong, or skilled you are."

98--Story 12

With a light strapped on to his forehead, Teddy was having a cave exploration adventure. There were no other lights rigged up to show visitors the way. But with his light, he and the others along with him who also had their own lights were finding their way through.

“Watch out for that deep puddle!” one might call out to the others. Or, “Look at that amazing formation. It’s huge!” another might be heard to say. Or “Be careful for the large, gaping hole that is easy to fall down into!” someone might say aloud.

It wasn’t easy to do, to get through this challenging cave, but just doing only what is easy won’t make life a great adventure. And it certainly won’t make you strong enough for taking on new challenges later on in life.

Teddy thought about this as he and the others made their way all the way through the cave. It led right through the small mountain and again out the other side to a clear pool of water where they were to swim.

“At last!” Teddy said, as they had all made it safely out. “Light!” one bear said with joy.

“And stable ground to walk on,” said another.

“And views that are lovely to see. I can see so far away!” exclaimed Teddy.

“And, trees, grass, flowers and gorgeous growth,” said the last one out of the cave.

They all embraced and then raced down the gentle slope leading to the crystal clear pool of water.

It wasn’t just any type of pool, but was fed by hot springs under the ground that bubbled up, so it was warm and very pleasant to swim in.

What a reward!

They each thoroughly enjoyed themselves, especially because they had helped each other do something that was hard. The time of relaxing felt even better, after doing a rather strengthening adventure.

This team of strong bears had been doing a series of activities. They had done some great mountain climbing. They had swam long distances over a lake. They had biked for days, while sleeping on the ground in very small tents. Today’s mountain cave adventure was just another thing they were doing to get up their strength and skill.

There was always preparation and training before they started off on each of these challenges, and there was always something really enjoyable afterwards. This is what made it possible for them to complete each challenging adventure and not give up.

When Teddy crawled into bed that evening, after such an exciting day, he had lots to write about. Just about every part of the day had strengthened him in some way. But he wanted to just say one short thought of one tip or secret to strength that he’d learned. It took a while to think of it, but at last he jotted the words:

“Prepare. Perspire. Patiently plod. Pleasure.”

These were the steps to achieving a goal that took strength to reach.

First you prepare in all the needed ways. Then you work hard. Then you keep going one step at a time, and don't give up. And you plan something enjoyable for reaching your goal. The anticipation of this desire keeps you going through the hard bits. Then you enjoy whatever fun was planned.

And what do you do next? Plan and prepare for the next goal or challenge. Always continuing to make new progress and reach new levels of strength and skill.

So that is a glimpse into how Teddy the Very Strong Bear got stronger day by day. He wasn't always a strong bear, nor did he always wish to be. But one day something happened that changed his perspective and made him want to gain new strength.

It was one day when his pants no longer fit him, and he'd outgrown his next pair of shoes.

"Hmm, think I must be getting taller," Teddy realised.

There was something else he realised on that day.

"Mother and father are still doing all the same things for me that they had to do to help me when I was too young to even reach the sink and wash my own dish."

This made Teddy think. He was now taller and could reach the sink, and the stove, and had big enough arms to do many things that he couldn't have done before. Yet, for some reason he wasn't doing anything more. He still was content to let his parents do it all. Why? Because he didn't feel strong enough to do more. It was easier to play.

"Well, one day I might be the big daddy bear and will need to be strong. I can't expect new baby bears to take care of me. I might as well start now to train myself in being big," Teddy decided.

And that is why he started to like doing things that seemed a bit harder, for that would make him stronger--and stronger is what he needed and wanted to be.

12 Short Tips for Getting Stronger—From Teddy's Notebook:

1—Dancing and flying with the stars at the end of the day

2—I won't let my feelings stop me from doing what I am meant to do.

3—Keep using the strength I have, and even try to do things that are a bit harder today than what I did yesterday!

4—Keep trying. Eventually you'll gain more skill and strength.

5— Shared strength can be twice as strong. Together we can do what one of us alone can't do so well.

6— Choose, and keep choosing what is the most important thing.

7— Say “no” to doing things that will weaken you.

8—Strength comes by patiently working at something, and it builds up bit by bit, through persistence.

9— Use my mind for good things, so it stays in shape and can work quickly when people are depending on me.

10— Practice smiling in all situations, and especially when things are a bit hard to manage.

11—It’s better to have someone nearby to call out to for help, no matter how brave, strong, or skilled you are.

12—Prepare. Perspire. Patiently plod. Pleasure.