

EVER HEARD OF A GAME CALLED "WHACK THE GOPHER"?

Whack the Gopher!



You, the player, get a large rubber sledgehammer and your job is to whack the toy gophers as they pop up from the "ground."

No sooner have you bashed down one gopher than another pops up somewhere else on the field.



Keeping those gophers down takes all your concentration.



Sometimes life can seem like that arcade game.

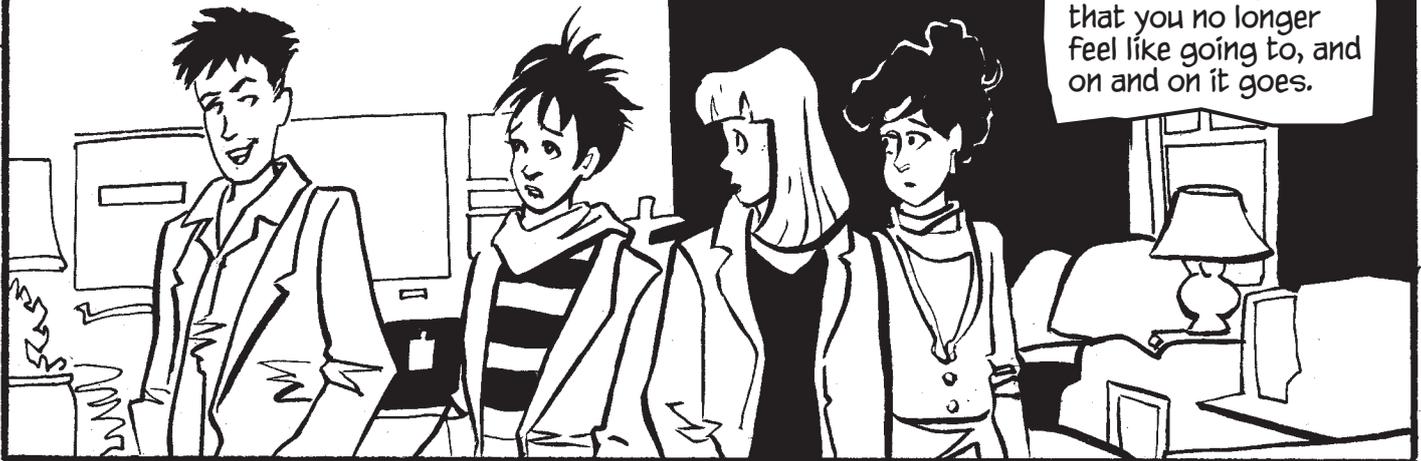
Maybe you are getting a C in science or math, so you work hard to pull up that grade.



Just as you have earned your B+, it turns out that you've missed a deadline for turning in the paperwork for your English class or music program.



You finally get that done ... and then you and your brother start having problems getting along because he embarrassed you in front of your friends.



This happens right before the big party that you've been excited about, but that you no longer feel like going to, and on and on it goes.

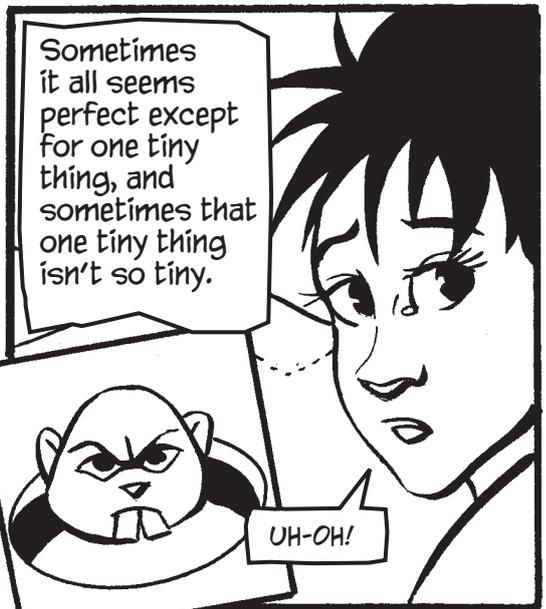
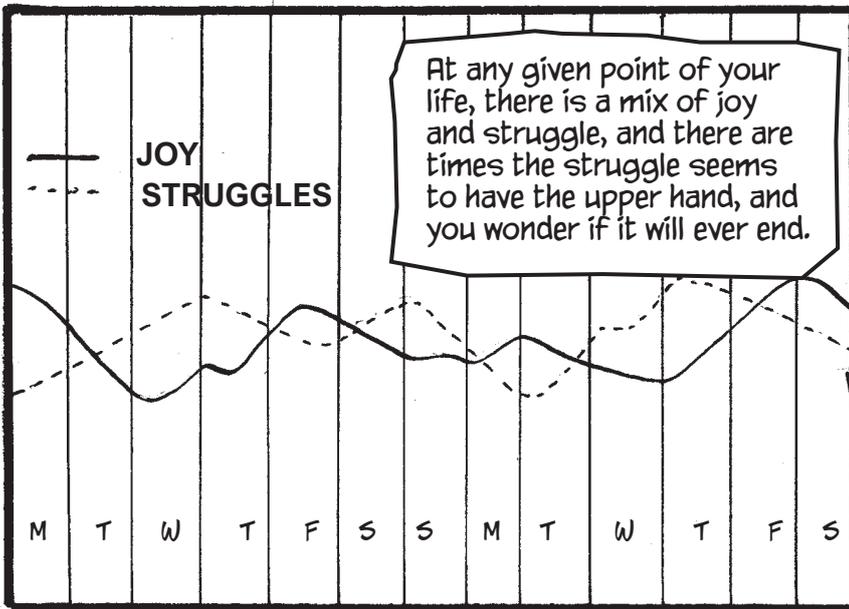
These things can steal your joy, especially when it seems like it never ends.

HERE'S THE THING:
THOSE "GOPHERS,"
OR PROBLEMS, WILL
NEVER COMPLETELY
GO AWAY.

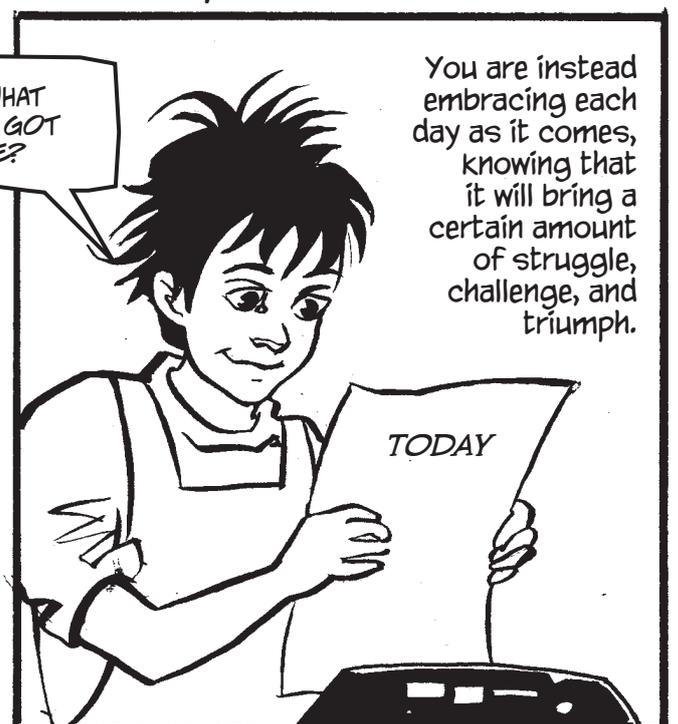
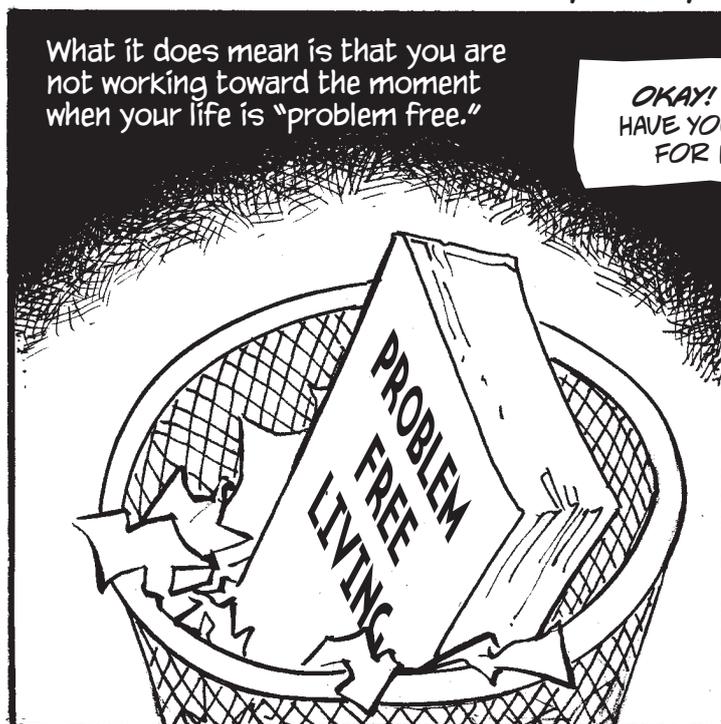
"It's our problem-free
philosophy... *hakuna
mata...*"



You can't live your life waiting to become totally problem free.



That doesn't mean you don't need to take care of situations as they arise, or even preempt them when possible.



The Bible promises,

"God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."¹

That means that while you don't get to choose your struggles and challenges, you are guaranteed the strength for them.

God measures out the strength and power according to how much you need.

AND WHO KNOWETH WHETHER THOU ART COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

It's not based on how you feel or what you think you can handle.

That promise and similar ones found in the Bible enable you to be sure that you can overcome regardless of what wins or losses, successes or failures you face in your day-to-day life.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.²

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.³

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.⁴

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV

² James 1: 2-3 NIV

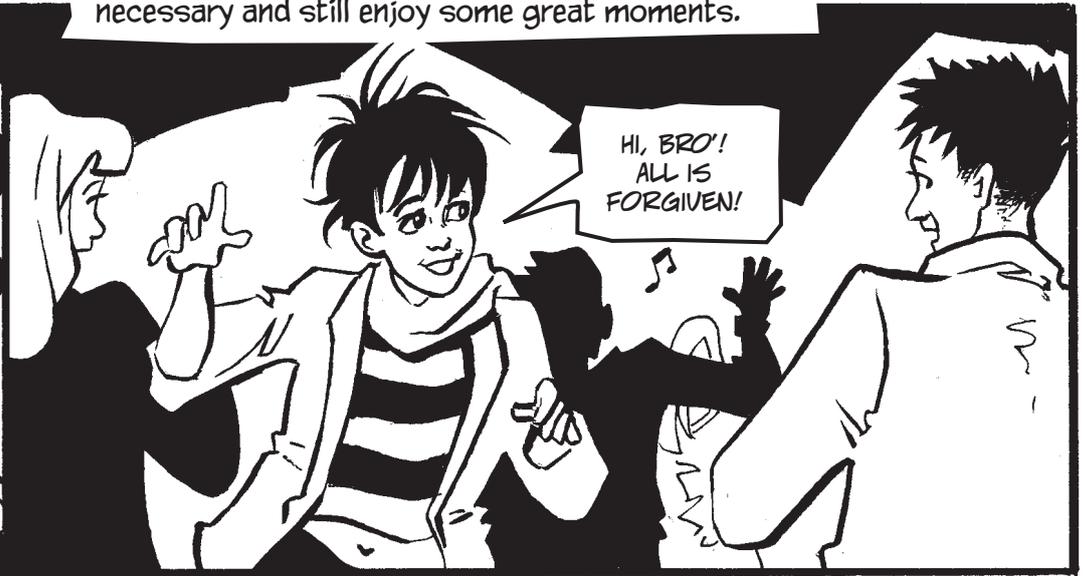
³ Romans 8:28 KJV

⁴ Romans 8:37 KJV

HOW'S THAT FOR EMPOWERING?

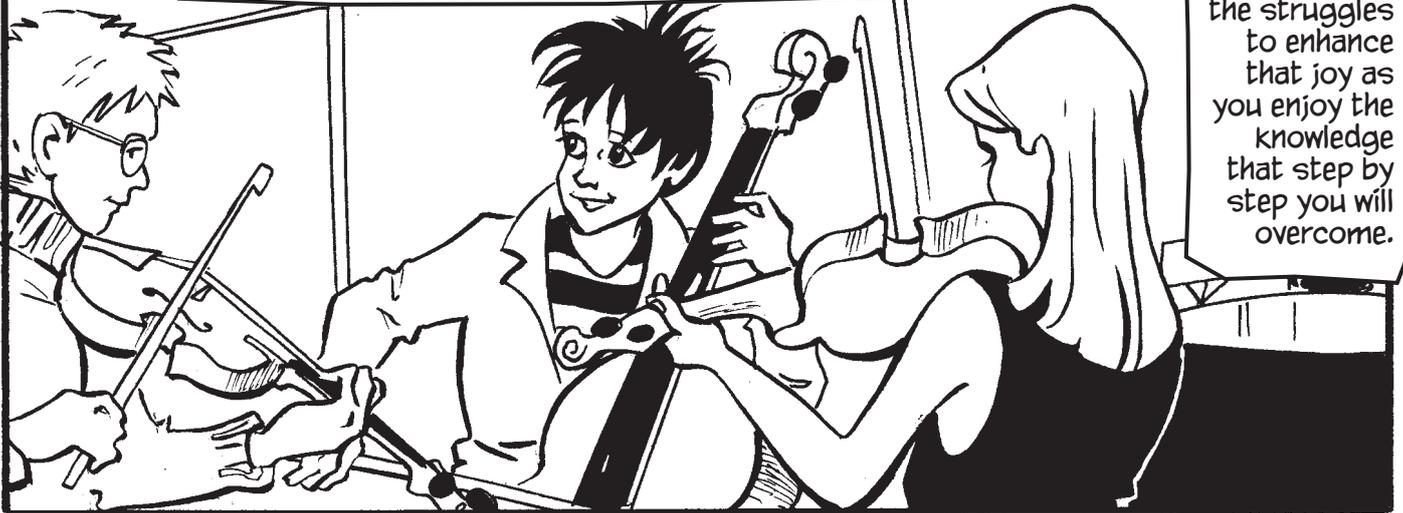
You're able to take down those "gophers" as necessary and still enjoy some great moments.

HI, BRO!
ALL IS FORGIVEN!



Try to take on the attitude that there will always be challenges, but you are not going to let them steal your joy.

In fact, you can even allow the struggles to enhance that joy as you enjoy the knowledge that step by step you will overcome.



Tuck God's promise deep in your heart to give you sufficient strength for each day and grace for any challenge it brings, ...

I have stored up
your word in my
heart, that I might
not sin against
you.⁵

...and live that day
to the full, and then
... repeat daily.

⁵ Psalm 119:11 ESV