

In the Face of Adversity...

Dive Right In

Judith Wynhausen

It was a beautiful day in San Diego. The waves were gentle, the sun was warm, and for a fourteen-year-old girl from Missouri, it was heavenly. I swam out beyond the place where the waves broke on the sand, and floated for a while, enjoying the gentle rise and fall of the waves. My parents and brother were on the shore, and I felt blissfully peaceful in the water.

Then I noticed that the swells were getting higher and a little choppy, so I decided I'd better swim back to the beach. I reached a point where I could stand up, and I started wading through the water, but the undertow was too strong. I couldn't move my feet! I turned around and I saw a huge wave towering over my head with a little white cap of foam on top. The wave crashed down directly on me,

and I was powerless in the force of tumbling water. I held my breath and felt my body doing sommersaults.

Finally I was able to stand once again and catch my breath. As I cleared the water and sand out of my eyes, I again felt that strong undertow. I tried to call out for my parents, but they couldn't hear me. Once again I turned around, and there was another huge wave ready to break on me. I couldn't move my feet to get away from it. Crash! For a second time I was tumbled over and over with the force of the wave. I was beginning to panic. What if I couldn't get back in at all? What if I couldn't hold my breath long enough?

When I was able to stand up and take a breath again, for the third time I felt that undertow. I saw the wave poised above me, ready to pummel me to my death. Then I did the *Smartest Thing I've ever done*: I dove directly into the wave. The wave crashed, but I was already past the breaking point by that time, swimming underwater in the other direction. I then allowed the water to carry me safely into shore.

This early experience with the waves became a metaphor for my life. Whenever I feel myself being buffeted about by circumstances apparently beyond my control, I

remember those waves. Instead of trying to escape from the situation, I "dive into" it. I accept adversity as a learning tool, and move toward it to see where it will take me. This lesson has served me very well in personal relationships, work situations, and family crises: dive *into the wave!*

About the Author

Professional storyteller Judith Wynhausen writes and tells stories for all ages. Best known as Mother Goose, she recently translated Mother Goose rhymes into Spanish to perform bilingual stories. Judith also performs as other characters and tells a wide variety of stories without a costume or character. She is also a teacher, having taught music and theatre. She received training as a Waldorf kindergarten teacher and taught kindergarten for five years. Judith is mother to four children, ranging in age from 37 to 11. She lives on a ten-acre farm in Joplin, Missouri.