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Bouncing Back from Tough Times Part 1 – Self-Encouragement

Here is a familiar scenario for all of us; you may even be going through something like this right now: You have an exciting goal in mind, you've done your homework, you think you're amply prepared ... but things just don't work out. You've probably had times when you thought you were doing what you were supposed to do, but you were misinformed. You thought you had it all laid out, but it just didn't work. You burned the midnight oil day after day after day, but it didn't seem to help. You couldn't seem to change the end result.

These are the times when you have to be your own best cheerleader. And there are two ways to keep yourself encouraged.

Number one: Take responsibility for the missed opportunity or the misrepresentation. Learn from the fact that even though you made the best presentation possible, your client wanted it a different way. Be prepared for the letdowns that happen every so often. Know that this lost opportunity just sets you up to take advantage of the next one. Realize that you can make the necessary alterations next time. Make the changes that will make the difference. Study your mistakes and learn from them. Instead of dwelling on the mistakes, simply acknowledge them and learn from them. Remind yourself that you're smarter than your bank account leads you to believe.

Encouragement practice number two: Remind yourself that you're bound to get better. Don't get down on yourself. Don't beat yourself up. It's the next opportunity that matters, not the last one. The last one matters only in that you must learn from your mistakes. But the next one gives you the opportunity to show that you have learned from your mistakes. You can do it better next time. You just have to practice. Keep trying until. Until what? Until you've got it down.

If you figured out what went wrong last time, then you know how to make it right next time. If you figured out what it was in your presentation that didn't work, don't say that next time. If you figured out that the reason you didn't close the deal this time was because you didn't have all the facts and figures in place, have all the facts and figures in place next time. Don't beat yourself up for messing up. Pat yourself on the back for figuring it out.

You need to encourage yourself. You need to pump yourself up. You need to be your own cheerleader. Why? Because you can't wait and hope that someone else will come along and cheer you up ... make you feel better ... tell you that you'll do better next time. You have to rely on yourself. You have to have faith in yourself and your ability to figure out what works and what doesn't. You have to have the inner belief that everything you're doing, you're doing for a positive outcome in the future. You have to encourage yourself with future successes.

When you miss an opportunity, are unprepared for an opportunity, or suffer a setback while realizing your goals, you need to encourage yourself by immediately getting back into line.

There's an old cowboy saying, "Fall off a horse seven times and you're a real cowboy." If you fall off a horse, get right back on. If you fall off track, get right back on. If you fall away from your disciplines, get right back to them. If you fall out of habit, get back into the habit. Something goes wrong, do what you can to make it right.

If you fall off ... get back on. If you fall off the horse, that is, the horse of habits or disciplines or progress, get back on. It may be hard. It may be a bit frightening. But get back on. Keep your resolve alive and active and well. Cheer yourself on to victory. You can do it.

Part 2 – Where the Miracle Begins

Sometimes, defeat is the best beginning. Why? Well for one thing, if you're at the very bottom, there's only one way to go-up. But more important, if you're flat on your back, mentally and financially, you'll usually become sufficiently disgusted to reach way deep down inside yourself and pull out miracles. Pull out talents and pull out abilities and pull out your desires and determination. When you're flat broke or

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flat miserable, you'll eventually become so disgusted that you'll pull out the basic essentials required to make everything better.

It's in the face of adversity that things begin to change, that you begin to change. With enough disgust, desire and determination to change your life, you'll start saying, "I've had it. Enough of this. No more. Never again!"

Here's where the miracle begins. "I've had it. Enough. No more. Never again." These words and these thoughts really rattle the power of time and fate and circumstances. And these three things, time and fate and circumstances, all get together and say, "Okay. Okay. We can see that we have no power here; we're facing some major resolve! This guy's not going to give up. He's had it. He's done with all this nonsense. We'd better step aside and let this guy get by!" "Inspiration through disgust.

A lot of people don't change themselves. They wait for change. These poor unfortunate folks accept their defeats and wallow in their self-pity. Why? Because they refuse to take control of the situation. They refuse to take control of their life, their career, their health, their relationships, their finances. They refuse to take responsibility and get sufficiently disgusted to change it.

If you are disgusted, if you are in need of some change, if this book finds you in the middle of your own personal slump, then I have some words to offer. Your present failure is a temporary condition. It is only a temporary condition. You will rebound from failure, just as surely as you gravitated into failure.

One time, when I was in the midst of a bout of failure, somebody suggested that I should tell myself, "This too shall pass." I firmly believe that you're only given as much as you can handle, as much negativity, as much failure, as much disappointment. This too shall pass, if you grasp for a new beginning. You need to pull yourself up and move back into the world with a plan.

As foolish as it might sound, you should be thankful for your current limitations or failures. They are the building blocks from which to create greatness. You can go where you want to go. You can do what you want to do. You can become what you want to become. You can do it all, starting now, right where you are.

A father talks about his daughter. She's gone through some pretty tough times, and as he tells it, she's a pretty tough person. He has a unique way of describing his daughter's situation, though. While most parents would be frantic, even for their kids who are grown and gone, this man just smiles and says that his daughter is like a frog in a jar of cream: She keeps kicking and kicking and kicking, and pretty soon the milk will turn into a lump of butter and she'll be able to jump out. That's an interesting illustration of tenacity, because that's how it really works. You've got to keep trying and trying and trying. You've got to have enough resolve to do it until.

Some of the most inspiring success stories have started with failure. Longfellow started in failure. Michelangelo started in failure. Lincoln started in failure. Rod Serling wrote 40 stories before he had one that was accepted. Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper that felt he had no talent. Richard Byrd crashed his plane on his first solo trip before he became one of the world's greatest explorers. And the success stories continue.

Be grateful for your adversity. At the same time, make sure that it's working for your future, not against you. Make your failures give birth to great opportunity, not prolonged agony. Make your disgust lead to inspiration, not depression. The world will willingly sit by and let you wallow in your sorrows ... until you die broke and alone. And here's what else the world will do. The world will step aside and let you by, once you decide that your present situation is only temporary. The doors will open once you decide to get back on your feet and make your mark.

You have to care. In your own enlightened self-interest, give a run at adventure. Keep your eyes firmly set on achievement. Don't settle for mere existence and self-pity. Make a commitment to excellence. And remember, it is your challenge, your own personal challenge, to use all your gifts and skills and talents and knowledge to survive and succeed.

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Part 3 – Increasing Your Resiliency

Resilience is the ability to return to the original form after being bent, stretched or compressed. That's the dictionary's definition of resilience. It's the ability to readily recover from illness, or depression, or adversity.

In our lives, resilience specifically means being able to withstand setbacks, broken hearts and broken dreams, financial crisis, loss of loved ones, loss of enterprise, and loss of health. How would you ever handle it if you lost everything you had today? What would your next step be? How long would you be depressed and upset and angry? What would it take for you to pull yourself up and start all over again? How resilient are you? Could you handle it? Could you learn from all of your disappointments and start all over again? What would it take?

Number one, it would take a lot of self-discipline. It would take a lot of positive self-talk to muster up the energy to begin again. It would take a lot of concentration to block out the noise and the clutter of all the negative voices trying to get through, as well as the negative voices of others around you. That's a lot! It would take a lot of discipline to balance the fear and anxiety with the knowledge that, if you did it once, you can do it all over again.

It would also take a lot of self-reliance. Whether your losses had anything to do with you or not, your future success has everything to do with you. It would take a lot of self-reliance to avoid blame. What's happened has happened. You would need to get on with your life and begin again.

It would take a lot of faith. It would take a lot of faith and trust in God to move ahead.

If you lost everything tomorrow and you were gathering all the courage to try again, it would take a lot of self-appreciation. You need to know in your heart and mind that you have the skills, the talent and the strength to do it one more time.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, no matter how large or how small. You lose a client, one of your biggest ones. This client accounts for more than 25 percent of your gross revenue. Losing this client is going to hurt, financially and emotionally. Losing this client is going to negatively affect things for a while. The first thing you do is figure out why you lost this business. What role did you play? In what way are you responsible? You can't just rant and rave, yelling and screaming at everyone in the office. Even if it was the wrongdoing of someone else, you can't act like this, because it's not professional. You'll lose respect. And respect is hard to regain once you've lost it, whether it's the respect of those you work with, your trusted colleagues or your valuable support people. You have to approach the situation rationally and figure out how to bounce back from your loss.

You have to evaluate the situation and then start a plan to recapture the lost business. Consider how you can increase your market share with other businesses. Maybe you can network with associates to bring in a similar client or even a better one! You can't sit back and dwell on what's happened. You've got to get back into the marketplace and recapture what's been taken from you. Get back at it and replace what's gone.

Perhaps your loss is a personal loss. Maybe you've recently been faced with the death of a loved one, a divorce or the loss of a very special friendship. If your loss is a deeply personal one, you must approach the situation a little differently. You must be patient with yourself and give yourself time to grieve, time to mourn, time to regroup.

The stages we go through in loss, be it the death of a loved one, the death of a relationship or the death of an enterprise, are beautifully defined in Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' book *On Death and Dying*. Whether the death is a literal one or a figurative one, the stages are the same: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. And only by going through these stages and reaching acceptance can we rebound and begin again.

It's said that children are more resilient than adults. Why? Maybe it's because they don't evaluate their current situation based on past experiences. They approach it in a fresh way, a new way. In their own minds, they deal with loss much better than adults.

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Children who grow up in the unfortunate circumstances of poverty or abuse or neglect and later become successful are known as “dandelion children.” If they can succeed and prosper with terrible conditions, they can grow anywhere. It’s important to be more like a dandelion child. To be able to grow and prosper and succeed despite our current conditions. To be able to grow and prosper and succeed despite our losses. To be resilient.

Cultivating a resilient character turns what others would call failure into success. A resilient person won’t give up. A resilient person will, in spite of all obstacles and setbacks, keep doing it until.

In their book *The Resilient Self*, Steven and Sybil Wolin studied resilience and found seven key characteristics that compose it.

No. 1: Resilience requires insight. You need to develop the ability to ask tough questions of yourself and be honest with your answers. If you had something to do with your loss, be honest and responsible for it.

No.2: Resilience is independent. As a resilient person, you can count on yourself to bounce back into life.

No.3: Although resilience is independent, it’s also tied to others. The more people you are responsible to, the greater your motivation to begin again. The stronger the reason, the stronger the action.

No.4: Resilience calls for initiative. You need to develop the ability to take charge of the situation, to take charge of the problem. You need to stand up and do whatever is necessary to get back on course.

No.5: Resilience has an element of creativity. With resilience, you are able to look at a situation and creatively determine the best way out. You are enterprising in your approach toward starting over.

No.6: A resilient person has humor. You may cry until you start laughing, but a sense of humor is so important when turning your life around. You’ve got to take your goals seriously, and you’ve got to take yourself seriously. But you’ve also got to be able to laugh at yourself and your situation at times. If somebody says, “You’ll look back on this and laugh someday.” Well, maybe today is the day to start.

No.7: A resilient person has a strong sense of morality. Whatever you do to get back on your feet, whatever you do to bounce back into life, make sure it’s moral. Make sure that your upcoming success is at the service of others, not at the expense of others. Success, if it is yours to keep, must be at the service of others.

The more obstacles you face and overcome, the more times you falter and get back on track, and the more difficulties you struggle with and conquer, the more resiliency you will naturally develop. There is nothing that can hold you back if you are resilient.

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