

WHEN THINGS DON'T GO YOUR WAY

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” - *Thomas Edison*

The journey to your goal may be tougher than you expected, but looking back you'll probably find that the twists and turns were what made it worthwhile. Some of the greatest successes have been achieved by people who dared to fail and never gave up.

Thomas Edison's teachers reported that he was “too stupid to learn anything.” Edison was fired from his first two jobs for being “non-productive.” As an inventor, Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?” Edison replied, “I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.”

“Our greatest glory is not in never failing but in rising every time we fall.” - Confucius

Many people when facing a crisis let themselves be overwhelmed by stress that quickly turns to fear. It's easy to be fearful, but if you remain brave your employees will be, too, and together a strong team can turn any situation around.

FedEx founder Fred Smith received a “C” on a college paper detailing his idea for a reliable overnight delivery service. His Yale professor said, “Well, Fred, the concept is interesting and well formed, but in order to earn better than a ‘C’ grade, your ideas also have to be feasible.”

A newspaper editor fired Walt Disney because he “lacked imagination and had no good ideas.” Disney went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland. The proposed park was rejected by the city of Anaheim on the grounds that it would only attract riffraff.

Between rejections and workplace screw-ups, we've all experienced the familiar gut-wrenching numbness that attends a crisis. The paradox is that those who enjoy the greatest successes have often endured the most spectacular failures.

Some common-sense thoughts to remember:

- **When things aren't going as planned, don't lose your self-confidence.** I stress this strongly in my book *Moving Up*. Every one of us is a work in progress, but if you don't take the time to

examine and correct yourself and your behaviors, you'll run the risk of becoming complacent.

- **Work on improving your relationships with people.** Your relationships can help make you successful.
- **It takes hard work to turn dreams into reality.** If you set clear goals, have the self-confidence to act and believe that you'll succeed in time, you'll greatly improve your odds of making it. Sitting still is easy, but it's anathema to success.
- **Get regular exercise.** The benefits are powerful: a sense of health and youthfulness, increased physical and mental energy, productivity, and success.
- **Out-learn the competition.** Be obsessed with learning. Be a voracious reader.
- **Get plenty of rest.** Hitting the sack early and getting an early start is a habit of successful people. You'll feel rested and get more done.
- **Ask.** There are always people we can learn from. Successful people nearly always have had mentors who helped them on their path.
- **Make time for your family.** The price of success doesn't have to include giving up your personal life. Make sure your schedule includes time for hobbies, family life, and weekends away. Too much of anything risks becoming a weakness.

Overcoming hardships and failures requires that we cultivate excellence in every aspect of our lives, including the way we treat ourselves and others. By getting back up after we fall, and by seizing our opportunities, the stumbles will be merely a fading image in our rearview mirror.

Sometimes you win, sometimes you learn.

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