

# After You Mess Up, Step Up

Best-selling author and speaker Tommy Newberry has joined business leader and entrepreneur Curt Beavers to write *I Call Shotgun*, a strategic playbook for men who want to become loving and effective fathers to sons. By preparing dads to confidently pass down a legacy of values and ideals, *I Call Shotgun* equips men to have long-lasting and deeply influential relationships with their sons.

The following is an excerpt from *I Call Shotgun*, a compilation of letters between select fathers and sons:

Brooks,

We all screw up; it is inevitable. Once you realize that it is a matter of “when” and not “if” you are going to make mistakes, then you will know that your response can make you or break you.

When you make a big mistake or get caught in a big sin and have to face the consequences, I pray that those poor choices only create short-term pain and do not cost a life, a dream, or a close relationship. If you are fortunate, you may experience the negative repercussions as a rather private matter. But there is no assurance of this. Today, very few of our transgressions remain private or off limits to the rest of the world.

Remember, you are not going to face self-inflicted turmoil because you are a necessarily “bad person.” You will sooner or later screw up entirely because you are human. Of course, it is always useful to examine one’s character and try to uncover any potential blind spots or weak spots following getting into trouble of any kind. And when you face adversity brought about by your own foolish choices, I want you to remember these four things:

- God still loves you the same as before and always
- Your mom and I love you no matter what
- You can and will bounce back if you keep your faith in God and His Word.
- Learn from your mistakes so you don't make them over and over again.

Believe it or not, it's a blessing to be caught early when you are violating God's principles and compromising your own values system. No doubt that it is okay and natural to not feel good, much less grateful if you're caught.

Ha Ha! Nevertheless, thank God anyway! Thank your heavenly father that your wrong behavior has been brought to light, and be grateful for both his grace and mercy—whether you feel like it or not. Allow God to shine light on things He wants to expose, have you learn from them, and put them behind you.

Even if an unacceptable behavior hasn't become public, own the unwise choice or choices and boldly verbalize 100 percent responsibility for your part in the mess, whatever that might be. Accept the responsibility for what you thought, said, did, or neglected to do that has created these negative conditions in your life.

Many of the mistakes you make while young you will laugh about later. Therefore, as appropriate, laugh a good bit right now. There is little to be gained from making mountains out of molehills. Besides, others in authority will quite likely do that for you anyway.

What's done is done. Keep the big picture in mind. It's what you do next that really matters and can lead to maturity and wisdom. Ironically, unwise choices can lead to wisdom, but there is no guarantee that this will be the case. It's up to you. I believe in you and know that the problems you will face

are small compared to the resolve in you and God walking beside you.

Your mom and I are continuously praying for your protection, your peers, and your purpose, that nothing would interrupt or sidetrack God's plan for your life. He has such great plans for you. Know that I am in your corner. Like your heavenly father, I am pulling for you and cheering for you even when we are miles apart. Along with your mom, I am ready to help whatever the circumstances may be. You can count on that!

Learn this special verse, Brooks, and keep it handy . . . just in case: "But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13–14 NKJV).

Dad