

Why Failure May Be Your Road to Spiritual Weight-Loss Success

Everyone craves it, and once we get it, we want more of it. It's what the American dream is built on. It's the seven-letter word that makes all the difference in world-success. But we can't talk about that word without its antithesis—failure.

Without a doubt our goal when tackling any project, is to succeed. We don't want to be branded with the scarlet F on our foreheads for all the world to see. We don't want to fail.

So, what happens is that many times, we don't try for fear of failing. We want to lose weight, but have stopped trying because we've always failed before, and failure seems worse to us than trying. Success, though, is best learned at the hand of failure.

When we get to the point where we have gained weight and want to lose it, most of us try to muster up the willpower to just fly into another diet. We try for a week and have success, and then we throw up our hands in defeat.

We may know how to be successful in every other area of our lives, but being successful at losing weight seems impossible. That's because losing weight and living healthy a healthy life are not about a diet. It's about a process, and failure is a huge part of that

Motivation

It all begins with motivation. At the outset, we determine that instead of diet, we are going to learn how to incorporate change on all levels into our lives. If we are going to submit

to total change, that means losing weight has to be about more than just fitting into that cute dress for our high school reunion.

Our motivation must then move us to understand that God Himself wants us to be in good health physically, just as our souls prosper spiritually (See 3 John 2, AMP). This is yet a deeper understanding of why we are on this journey. It's bigger than we are. It goes to our destiny in Christ.

Self-Control

Motivation leads us to surrender completely to God and allow Him to begin to teach us how to walk this journey. However, knowledge is really not our problem as much as applying knowledge. This is where self-discipline and self-control come into play.

I always felt I had no self-control, no way to bring myself into line with what I really wanted to do. "I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is bad, but I do it anyway" (Rom. 7:19, NLT).

The Lesson of Failure

This was because I was afraid to fail. I'd always failed before, so I just kept doing what I had always done instead of changing, because I didn't want to try and then fail again.

When we are going toward any great endeavor, we will encounter resistance in the form of fear of failure. When this arises, you know you are on the right path.

When you fail, and you will because you are human, don't turn and run the other direction. Look at what happened. Dissect it and see where you went wrong, and then determine not to do that again.

Christmas Cookie Fiasco

About the second or third Christmas that I had gone sugar-free, my daughter came home from college and wanted to make sugar cookies with me. We decided to use cookie cutters to make cookies for the extended family to decorate.

I did well with not eating the dough or the cookies and saving them for party day. Afterwards, though, folks didn't take their decorated cookies with them. We were left with lots of cookies. That night when I was cleaning up, I tasted one, and that was it. I was off to cookie land!

The next morning I woke up, went downstairs to the kitchen, saw the cookies sitting on the counter, had one in my hand, and I heard God whisper, "What are you doing?"

I took all the cookies and threw them in the trash. Since that day, I've not had a problem discarding things I might be tempted to eat that I shouldn't. I only learned this hard lesson by failing. I wouldn't have learned it any other way.

Rising From the Ashes

From failure, we can learn how to discipline ourselves. We can learn to stay within good boundaries because we have learned from experience what works for us and what doesn't work.

That then leads to success, born of failure. I have no problem staying away from cookies even when well-meaning people might tell me one won't hurt me. It will hurt me, because I know one will lead to way more than that. For me, it's best to stay inside my safe boundaries.

Personal failure is the best teacher if we can take shame out of the equation. We ask for forgiveness. and then we learn from our mistakes. Shame is there if we have not learned our lesson.

Discipline

"Disciple" and "discipline" are two words that are really

close in meaning. To be a disciple of Christ means we follow His disciplines, we obey what we know God wants us to do. Discipline is meant to help us correct our disobedience.

To have self-discipline sets me free to follow God in all things. As the Psalmist said, "I will walk with you in complete freedom, for I seek to follow your every command" (Ps. 119:45, TPT).

Failure and success are both a part of self-discipline. We discipline ourselves when we see an area in our lives where we have a tendency to fail over and over again, like me with the Christmas cookies.

In subsequent years, the cookies have become an inconsequential thing that go in the trash after the event is over. Now everyone at the party has success in that we haven't added extra pounds to our bodies, but we've had a bit of fun together..

Developing Character

We all want to be perfect, but it's failure that develops the all important aspect of godly character. In Matthew 5:48, Jesus tells the people listening to be perfect. The Amplified version defines perfect here as "growing into spiritual maturity both in mind and character, actively integrating godly values into your daily life."

We can only do that by living our lives, by making mistakes and learning from them, from putting ourselves out there, by being resolved to step out in faith even when it feels like we will fail.

From that will come the impetus for our greatest successes. I should know. Embracing and learning what God wants me to learn from my failures is one of the biggest reasons I've lost over 250 pounds and kept it off since 2013.

This, of course has been my greatest lesson about failure. My success came because I failed greatly. My success would not have been so notable had my failure not been so humongous. Great success only comes from great failure.

There is no direct path to losing weight and changing your lifestyle to a healthy one. It's up and down, it's around corners, through flooded creeks, over downed trees and up and over unscalable walls.

It's an impossible journey only made possible by the grace of God. It's His strength and His power flowing through us every day that brings success out of our most difficult failures.
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