

Falling in Love with Failure

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500 words

“When you fall, make sure to fall forward.”

- Anonymous

My life had become a three decade long pursuit of success that resulted in massive failure. I am scheduled to lose two decades buried in a human warehouse on the fringes of the world. All my money, self-esteem, family, friends, hope and purpose, even my faith: Irrevocably gone. This left me in a deep depression and filled me with shame. I believed that if I failed in these aspects of my life – my whole life was a failure. I was a loser.

One of the hardest parts of enduring a prison sentence is the feeling of being a piece of shit. Whatever your crime, guilty or innocent, as a convict, it is easy to feel two inches tall. We have to be philosophical about these things. Everyone fails. There is no life ever lived without some pain—even Jesus Christ endured some trauma.

It is common in today's society to equate achievement with self-worth. We suffer because we give ourselves or allow ourselves to be labeled, “I am a failure. You are a failure”-- but it is a flawed mechanism. No one can claim they have never failed and just because you have failed doesn't make you are a failure. It makes you human. We all need to hear that

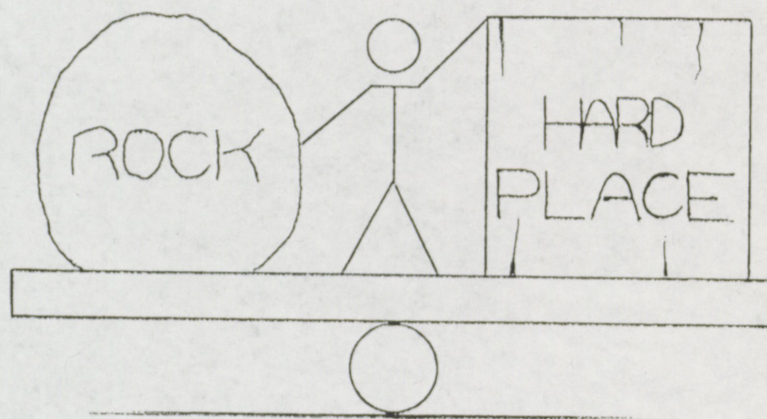
sometimes—inmates, maybe, most of all. We are constantly surrounded with the physical manifestation of our worst mistakes. The darkness can be all consuming if we let it.

Failure must be viewed with perspective. Firstly, strip the labels. At the end of the day failing is a part of life. We control what we can and let the rest of it go. We have to love ourselves enough to forgive ourselves. To see past our individual failures and find the goodness we all carry inside of us. To embrace failure.

Secondly, see failure for what it really is—an opportunity to learn and develop self-compassion and resilience. Most importantly, it gives us a chance to re-set and try again using our newly learned lessons. And because now we see failure for what it can be instead of what we thought it was, we can even begin to like failure, even love it. The realization was mind-blowing. It wasn't me against the system or society. It was me versus me—it always has been.

Three Tips:

1. Start small. Small achievable steps with an eye on the bigger goal
2. Focus on what you can do. There will always be obstacles.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



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