

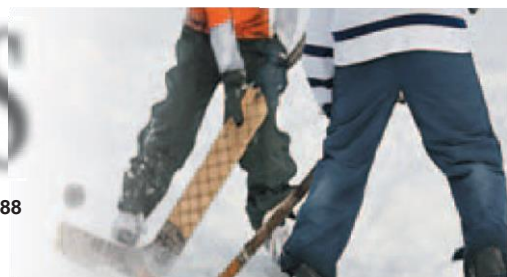


SPORTS

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Look on the bright side of things, even in failure



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Training Matters



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In the face of failure, it is human nature to feel disappointment. We feel defeated, exhausted, and as though we have not achieved that goal that we set out to do.

And when it happens — and it will — it is important to know how to manage the feelings that follow.

Now, I'm not starting this article off all negative and trying to shut you down! Let's face reality, though. If none of us ever failed, we would never truly appreciate success. And if none of us ever faced defeat, we'd all be superstars making billions of dollars for having some unheard of talent.

Failure is a huge part of success. When Michael Jordan talks about his professional basketball career, he's been quoted as saying, "I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

It is not news to hear the difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is how they manage and cope with failure and adversity. So how do we push through the tough times when all we want to do is throw in the towel? How do we fail over and over and over again like Jordan, but have the strength to keep going? Some would argue you can't teach that, the heart and drive in someone. I believe that even with the strongest motivation, it still requires mental strength to continue to try when you feel like you can't get up again.

Ideally, setting up your season before it even starts is the key to managing your success throughout the year. If this has not been done, however, it does not mean that it cannot be managed. What is the fire that burns in your belly? Coming back to it will keep you engaged with your internal motivation. Usually when you feel like you want to give up, it's because you're not satisfying that motivation anymore.

I have talked about motivation in the past, and the main point is that your motivation must always be central to your participation for you to want to keep trying. So all things aside, let's assume that your motivation is being satisfied. Pushing through often requires laser focus, and tuning into exactly what needs to happen in small, manageable steps.

Instead of seeing the scoreboard as down by X points or goals, it is important to see exactly what you need to do to change the situation. If it's soccer, for example, do you have the ball? Because that would be a step towards scoring. Gain possession, then make it past the forwards, and then through the defense, then finally shoot to score. Notice the small steps making it more manageable. Not thinking "We have to score 10 goals to even catch up," but working with one little step at a time.

This makes it more reasonable, manageable, and far less intimidating. When you're feeling defeated and stuck, the last thing you need is a daunting task that is going to shut you down even further.

If we go with the example of the end of a tournament, performance, or season that you feel that you've failed in, not much changes. We are our own biggest critics in life, and can see everything that we've done wrong to get us to that point. Instead, transition your thoughts and self-talk to that of a more positive nature in order to objectively evaluate your performance. It was not a complete failure, although you may see it as that. You tried, awesome! You got out there and took the chance, and with every chance, there is always a chance you'll fail, and always a chance you'll succeed. So good job, yay you!

With a positive outlook, you'll also be able to step back and examine what you did right. Give yourself permission to accept successes and be proud of them. They're a result of your hard work and training.

Now, still staying in the positive mindset, think about the mistakes that you made, and what you would change if you had the chance to do it over. Do not see them as failures; see them as teaching points. Moving forward, use those points as part of your motivation. Each day when you head out to train, keep these in your mind, positively focused on how they're making you an even bigger threat on the playing field.

Switch the negative to positive so that you can break it down, step back, and evaluate your next plan of action. How will this make you stronger? How will this build your competitive edge? And most importantly, how will you use this defeat as the biggest springboard into your newfound success? Your past results will equal your current thoughts. But only your current thoughts can change your future results. So change your mindset and watch the magic happen.

