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How to Transcend Failure

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I've got an impressive resume of failure. Really. It's embarrassing to admit, but it's true. At one time or another I've failed in every area of my life. Seriously. I've broken things I hoped to fix, dropped things I hoped to carry, and hurt people I hoped to help. I've had failure slam dunk some of my best ideas and trash my best efforts. I think maybe that's why I avoid it so vigorously.

But should I? Is failure really something to run away from? I'm sure the enemies of Jesus believed death would spell his FAILURE. Yet, listen to what Jesus said in reference to his impending death, "Whoever loves their life will lose it. Whoever hates their life in this world will keep it to eternal life.

“If anyone serves Me, let them follow Me. Where I am, there will My servant be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor them. “Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this time?’ But for this reason, I came to this time of suffering." (John 12:25).

Staggered by Failure

Following the Lord's death the disciples were staggered by the sense that they had wasted over three years of their lives. All of their hopes disappeared like smoke in the wind. All of their dreams vanished like a sunken ship. All of their preparation seemed wasted like a bad bet. Jesus had died and they were all failures--both in their own eyes and in the eyes of almost everyone else.

They were so blind to a fundamental law of life that even when they heard that Jesus had been raised from the dead, some of them doubted. I don't blame them. Yet, when they saw the risen Lord, everything changed. The seed that had died and been buried had come to life and would produce many more seeds.

Failure Is the Seed of Success

Of course, I realize Jesus was talking about his death and resurrection. But he was also stating a principle of life that his death and resurrection validated. And it's a principle of life that may bear on your current situation. Here it is: Failure is the seed of success. Once you embrace that reality you'll discover it's a limitless source of courage.

Life Is Difficult

Does the law of success mean we should seek failure? Of course not! Does it mean failure is okay? No! It simply means we don't need to fear failure because it can't defeat us. I'm reminded of the startling words of M. Scott Peck which appear on the first line of his best-selling book, *The Road Less Traveled*. He wrote, "Life is difficult.

This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see this truth, we transcend it. Once we truly know that life is difficult--once we truly understand it and accept it--then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters."

Failure is a part of life. When we embrace that truth, we transcend it. Once we accept the fact that failure happens then we can courageously face failure because we know it can't be completely avoided. Instead of making leadership decisions that keep us from losing, we can make decisions we think will advance our cause. And when we fail, the lesson's we'll learn will enable us to succeed later on.

They Lost Before They Won

All you have to do is think of the great championship football teams of the last twenty years to know what I'm saying is true. The Giants, Colts, and Patriots--and others--all lost big games before they ever won the BIG ONE. The same is true of basketball. The Spurs, Heat, Pistons and Rockets all lost playoff games before they won it all.

I hate to lose. I hope I never again experience the pain of losing. But as much as I hate losing I realize God has ordered the universe in such a way that losing is the seed of success. Once you grasp that truth your view of challenges will be transformed. Instead of fearing you'll strike out when you step to the plate, you'll concentrate on staying true to form and making contact with the ball. If you do that, you'll get your share of base hits and home runs. Rather than trying to keep from losing, you'll be able to concentrate on leading the charge.