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HANDLING SETBACKS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

By Richard Curren

“Into every life a little rain must fall.” So said my wise old grandmother on the many occasions when I would come running to her, my lower lip quivering in the heartfelt agony of some childhood disaster. The wisdom of her words ring even truer some 30 years later. What she was telling me is that everyone will experience times of trial and setback. No matter how smart, rich, healthy, beautiful, popular, or careful you are, if you are going to live you are going to have to learn to deal with setbacks. I say setbacks because positive people, and I count myself among them, don’t accept the concept of failure. Failure would imply that absolutely nothing was gained from the entire experience, and that is simply impossible. Even the dumbest criminal in the world can tell you exactly where he went wrong in his master plan. If you can learn one thing from even the most negative outcome, it has been productive as a learning experience; a hard won lesson.

RISK NOTHING, GAIN NOTHING, EVEN IF YOU ONLY STAND TO GAIN IN EXPERIENCE.

Thomas Edison, while creating the light bulb went through several thousand trials before finally discovering the material that acted as the filament that would brighten our world. Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, (insert any great athlete you admire, or for that matter any famous person of achievement in any particular field) all missed far more shots than they ever scored on. Its part of the education called life. In short, it isn’t failing to reach a goal that makes a failure, it’s walking away no richer for the experience. It’s not the shortfall that counts; it’s what you do with it that really matters. To that end, I want to share with you today a simple technique that will help you to draw from any experience the lesson learned, and more importantly, get you back on the path to success smarter and more focused. I call it the Three R’s.

THE THREE R’S ARE:

REGROUP
REEVALUATE
REENGAGE

REGROUP- On a battlefield, military leaders will designate a “rally point”. Since one of the first truths of war is that no plan survives fully intact after initial contact with the enemy, leaders must have a way to muster their forces for the next move. Any worthwhile endeavor must be approached the same way. The first step is to regroup. When it is clear that the plan is not proceeding as expected, you must stop or at least hold your ground, and rally your forces to examine the plan. You will take far less casualties with a solid plan than you will moving forward with a force that is in shambles. Teams are only at peak power when they can bring all their assets together in a concerted effort. All positions should be reexamined, new data must be considered, and factors unforeseen must be added in. Only the can the leader formulate a

workable plan of action. The skill here is not in reformulating the plan, but knowing when is the time to take stock and reallocate effort and assets. Act too soon you lose the momentum and confidence, act too late you risk opportunity, morale and commitment to the new plan. Learn to recognize when to regroup and the rest will come easily.

REEVALUATE- The time is now for fast, but strategic thinking for the next engaging move. Life, like war, moves with lightening speed. There are two types of fighters, the quick, and the dead. Generals, like their business management counterparts, must constantly monitor the battle and the progress of their forces with the most accurate measures available to them. All information must be examined and calculated into the progress of the operation. All available resources must be tapped and experts pressed to the utmost of their abilities. All options, regardless of the source, must be evaluated. The successful leader is not necessarily the one with all of the answers; rather, they are the ones who can see the right path based upon all options presented to them. Finally, the goal itself must be examined. Is it really attainable at this time? At what cost to my resources and capability? Could I fall back and live to fight more efficiently another day? A victory is not a victory when there are no gains. Wars are won when your guys take and hold denied ground, alive. Never push a bad position, you will lose.

REENGAGE- In the final dogfight scene of the movie “Top Gun” Maverick, played by Tom Cruise, is in the fight of his life. His wingman is taking fire and in real trouble. Everyone believes he will chicken out at the moment of truth. Instead, he withdraws to a position just beyond the battle long enough to see the big picture. Then he sees where he will be most able to shoot down the enemy MIG fighter tearing his shipmates apart. At that critical moment, fighting back his fears, he reengages his aircraft in the battle and saves the lives of his fellow aviators. The same is true of any endeavor. Regrouping and Rethinking are useless steps if you fail to Reengage in the battle. You must trust that your decisions are solid and then execute them with persistence and tenacity. To be succeed in a very busy life you must act like a guided missile, constantly calculating and adjusting course for intercept with the target. That is why they are so effective, they don’t miss. If we call them “smartbombs” just think how much smarter a living, breathing person with intelligence and instinct will be when given the power to reengage with the direction necessary to achieve their goal.



Richard Curren is the co-founder and President of Boundless Limits International and Live Guilt Free. Rick’s passion is to speak and motivate others to live to their maximum potential physically, mentally, and spiritually. Through their events and publications, Rick and his wife Tanya are able to inspire others and show that each one has boundless potential to change our world. He is a former United States Army Officer. Rick serves on the Board of Directors for the So Help Me God Project as an Advisor and is a founding Board Member. With a passion for health and fitness, he is a Black Belt in Korean Olympic Tae Kwon Do, and serves as an Associate Instructor for Palmetto Martial Arts School.