

# It's Only Failure If You Stay Down

If you have made mistakes, even serious ones, there is always another chance for you. What we call failure is not the falling down but the staying down. – Mary Pickford

Mary Pickford, one of the earliest film stars, lived a glamorous life filled with riches and fame. But she had her share of triumphs and tragedies just like the rest of us. Although on the surface her life was the envy of many, she endured many losses in her personal and professional life. What set her apart was her strong sense of optimism and the belief that mistakes aren't fatal.

Who hasn't made mistakes? Hoo Boy! I've made some real bonehead ones in my life and had plenty of failures. I'd be willing to bet most of you have too. But as Pickford pointed out, failure comes from staying down and giving up. Do you give up when things don't go the way you planned -- or do you learn from your "failures" and try again?

You've heard this before -- our failures may turn out to be our best teachers -- if we learn from them. The real key is stepping back from a "failure" and looking at it objectively. What are the lessons that can be learned? What course corrections do you need to make?

1) Analyze what went wrong. Did you skip some important steps? Take someone or something for granted? Make projections based on inaccurate information? Here's where some real soul-searching and objectivity is essential.

2) Re-group and re-evaluate. Do you need to backtrack and take smaller steps for a little while instead of forcing yourself to take giant leaps that you're not ready for? Is your goal one YOU REALLY WANT or is it something you think you "should" want? What needs to happen to make what YOU WANT a reality? Break it all down into "bite sized pieces" so you can see what needs to be done. Then, make a decision to take whatever steps are necessary and commit to taking those steps.

3) Don't try to go it all alone. Do you need help? Ask for it. There is no shame in seeking out the help you need. It's a sign of intelligence to recognize areas where you can use some support.

Need a supportive group to bolster your confidence or act as a sounding board? Search out like-minded people who will cheer you on. As Barbara Sher pointed out, "Isolation is the dream killer." Do you need a coach who will help you on your journey? Hire one.

This is where you'll find those second chances, even if you've made some awful mistakes and miscalculations. Start building a team of optimists who believe in you and your dreams.

4) Begin again. Failure is only failure if you stay down. You're the one who makes the decision to get back up or to stay down. Change direction if that's what's required. If your direction was right, but what's needed is a little more effort -- then put in the effort. Do it consistently.

Refuse to shortchange yourself by giving up too easily. Refuse to let a failure, even a great big one, define you. Refuse to stay down!

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