

## Success or Failure?

We in the west have been taught horrible definitions of the words *success* and *failure*. We feel we have to be great at everything we do and often get frustrated when we're not. I've seen amateur golfers act out their rage when missing what they feel is an easy shot. How delusional. If it were truly easy, they'd be professionals, and even professionals rarely attain perfection.

I think it's most important to look at all of our experience as lessons. If we're living an examined life, one that is consciously at the wheel, we can learn from each situation. And, we can learn not only from our own hardships but those of others. Can you imagine if each of us had to experience every hardship there is? We'd all be in the loony bin!

For example, we all know that meditation can be a beneficial thing. Non traditional modalities and now modern science are acknowledging that. And it makes sense; if the mind and body are connected and our thoughts dictate our health and lives, doesn't it make perfect sense that if we were better able to train the mind, that we'd all be a lot healthier and happier? But we often begin and expect to get it right away. Frustration brews from perceived failures of long ago, and we give up too soon. Some of us don't even begin out of fear we can't do it or it's boring or that your friends might make fun of you. Well if most of the world knows it's a good thing, and seemingly everyone who's attained long lasting happiness does it, what's truly stopping you?

This culture is addicted to instant gratification, even though we intuitively know that nothing long lasting and beneficial is attained overnight. (Witness the over 90% eventual failure of most diets that do not include drastic lifestyle changes.) So, some of us read a book on meditation or attend a few classes, and by their respective endings we think we don't "get it." We think it's too hard and just drop it in favor of watching TV and eating Bonbons. My meditation teacher defined *success* in meditation as beginning your practice. Imagine that. No attachments to getting it "right" at conception. Just pure acceptance of what you're doing and being. I can liken this to doing Yoga. For 6 months I tried diligently to do a pose called Crow that involved balancing on the hands in a squatting position. I got mad at myself for not being able to do it. And then one day after I had given up without self recrimination, and accepted that I couldn't do it, I suddenly found myself in the pose. I was in shock, and at the moment I realized it, thought, "Hey, I'm in Crow pose!" And then I fell. Why? Because my mind got in the way and began thinking about it! If my mind were better trained at the time, I would have let myself feel what it was like to be in the pose as opposed to thinking and beginning a premature celebration that led to my crashing to the ground face first.

Likewise, *failure* is an illusion. Each experience is nothing more than that -- an experience. We can choose to learn from it or not, the latter is where true failure lies. And that's the truth, *failure lies!* Failure lies in not even trying, or worse, not even having anything to try for. How many of you feel "complete" enough that if on your death bed tomorrow, you can truly say you've done or even attempted to do everything you've always wanted to? Today's procrastination leads to tomorrow's regret. Wake up, we don't always have tomorrow.

And at the same time, don't beat yourself up for not trying or not attaining something. Nothing begets more misery than beating ourselves up for being miserable. Simply take everything in as an experience, neither labeling it good or bad, but just what is. This type of present moment acceptance is the basis for solid meditation, and thus a very important factor in attaining and keeping optimal health and happiness. You don't need to believe me, in fact, I recommend you don't; more, try it yourself. Nothing can change your convictions other than your personal experience.

We can also learn from those around us who have what we say we want. Numerous multi-millionaires are happy to teach you the secrets to attaining financial prosperity, yet we believe we can do it better on our own in our dead end jobs. Likewise, I share this column with you because I do have excellent health. And in the rare instance when I don't, I accept it as is, learn from it, and move on. I usually self heal in minutes because I understand what causes pain and illness, and also unhappiness. I've learned from some very wonderful teachers and am only sharing what they've taught me. You can try it, or continue to take an aspirin for every little pain, or to beat yourself up for not attaining what your definition of success is, or not. We can continue labeling things as success or failure with the old definitions that do not serve our highest selves, or we can take active steps to positive change by trying everything we can, and by accepting where we are in any given moment as nothing more than where we are in that given moment. Acceptance of the self is the highest gift you can give to yourself and to others.

*Dave Markowitz is an Intuitive Health Consultant and Author. Dave's shared the bill with Deepak Chopra and Gary Null and has been written about on ABCNews.com. He sees clients individually and in groups both by phone and in person. Sign up for his free newsletter at [www.DaveMarkowitz.com](http://www.DaveMarkowitz.com).*