



# Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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## When We Fail

"Failure is not an option!" How often these passionate words have been spoken at the start of a new challenge. Perhaps we have even said them ourselves. They point out times when the cost of success, however high, is cheaper than the cost of failure.

Yet, the reality of life is that we all have failed and will fail again. It's not that we fail all the time or in huge ways. It's just that along with our many successes, failure remains a persistent presence.

How do we fail? Basically, we fail whenever we do not accomplish a personal, identified goal. We fail when we do not complete a task, when we ignore a time-frame, when our results fall short of our expectations, when we violate our personal values and standards, when we wander from a chosen life-path, when we act when we shouldn't or don't act when we should, when we forget, ignore, or give up. And that's just the beginning.

With all these opportunities for failure, the question facing us is not "Do we fail?", but rather "What does it mean to us when we fail?" and "How do we handle failing?"

For some of us, failure (or at least the admission of failure) is "not an option" because we make the cost of such failure extremely high. We wrap our acceptance, our worth, and our significance around an image of success and winning. Failure becomes intolerable because we believe failure makes us "bad". If we're bad, we're also undesirable and at risk for rejection and abandonment. Failure, then, threatens the very core of our identity and our security.

Yet, it need not be this way. There is a better way to view and relate to our failures. It does, however, require that we first build a suitable foundation of truth to support it. Central to this foundation is the separation of our worth and significance from our skills and achievements. Room must be made for our inevitable failures, room that does not jeopardize our good identity or our right for respect from others.

Many of us have found that accepting the unmerited love, value, and relationship offered to us by our Creator God provides us with an unshakable identity of humble significance. This identity, in turn, produces within us the strength to fail, to face it, and to grow beyond it.

Working from such strength, we all can build a new relationship with our failures, seeing them not as enemies to be avoided at all cost, but as opportunities to:

- 1) Learn - to learn what doesn't work and where we are weak, vulnerable, and at risk for failing.
- 2) Re-allocate our resources - to spend time, energy, and effort strengthening and protecting our areas of weakness.
- 3) Recommit - to recommit to the goals, values, standards, and direction we believe in.
- 5) Reconnect - to reconnect spiritually to the source of our strength, our significance, and the meaning of our life ... and to reconnect with special friends who encourage us along our (at times) bumpy path.

When we allow our failures to mature us rather than crush us, to re-energize our commitments rather than deflate our confidence, we enjoy a freedom from fear that empowers us to move forward - to get up, dust off, and get going again, focusing of the positive contributions we can make to each other and the world.

This freedom is available to all of us. Let's build our foundation ... and be free!



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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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## Remembered for ... ?

Most of us are familiar with famous historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, and Presidents Eisenhower, Roosevelt, and Kennedy. We may even know about high-profile Biblical characters such as Moses, Noah, King David, and the Apostle Paul. Each of them has a permanent place in history reflecting the positive contributions they made during their life.

Yet, like each of us, each of these notable personalities failed repeatedly and, at times, spectacularly. In spite of this, they were used by their Creator to accomplish much good, for which they are remembered.

So it is with our God, the One who forgives our failings and "remembers them no more" ... the One who never forsakes us and empowers us in love to do good.

Let's do the same. Let's relate to each other in love, remembering each other not for our failings, but for the good each of us is privileged to do as we continue through life.



"To make no mistakes is not in the power of man; but from their errors and mistakes the wise and good learn wisdom for the future."

-Plutarch