

[IMAGE]

## Always Fall Forward

By Editorial Staff

Whether you've heard it before, it certainly bears repeating: Your growth as a person has far less to do with your victories than your failures – those moments when what you thought was going to happen; what you desperately wanted to happen; what you thought you were prepared for – doesn't pan out as you intended.

We all fall sometimes; but the key is to fall forward, not backward. Can we learn from our failures; or are we doomed to wallow in and repeat them ... over and over? Lifelong health and wellness awaits those who always fall forward; here are a few steps in this critical process to take to heart as we approach 2022:

*Step #1: Accept the reality of falling.* Try as we might, it can be difficult, if not downright impossible, to accept failure – or even the imminent threat of it.

Sometimes, we can't recover from failure; other times, we recover, but don't learn from it; and still other times, we fear it so much that we don't try in the first place. Accepting that failure is a necessary part of success – *but that falling forward each and every time is your No. 1 goal* – sets you up for lifelong success.

*Step #2: Recognize that you're your own best friend.* When it comes to "making things happen," whether that's sticking to a fitness routine, losing (and maintaining) the weight you know you need to, getting better sleep or any other component of your health and wellness, you and you alone can make it happen – and survive the impact of bumps along the way. *But that doesn't mean you don't need support.* Friends, family, loved ones – and yes, your doctor – are all part of the team that helps you survive the falls, dust yourself off and keep moving forward.

*Step #3: Life is short, so live a balanced one.* Sometimes failure has more to do with how you executed something than any inherent weakness on your part. In fact, often it has to do specifically with the fact that your plan was too rigid in the first place. At some point, you were doomed to fall. Your health is the perfect example. If your wellness program doesn't allow for any flexibility – any cheat days, treats, days off, etc. – you're setting yourself up for burnout, injury and more. *But with that said, set limits.* Take a day or two off from the gym; not a month. Eat your favorite "cheat" meal every Sunday, every other Sunday, etc.; but make sure it doesn't bleed into Monday or longer. Life is short ... but it will be even shorter if you fall

backward every time.

*Step #4: Take small steps, but always see the big picture.* Whatever you're trying to accomplish in life requires a series of steps. The first step may seem like a big one (deciding to do something that you know could result in failure), but it's really just one of many steps that will lead you toward success in that area. *So don't forget about the big picture.* Keep it in your mind every day, even while taking those small steps. They will add up as you get closer and closer to your goal, even when setbacks (falls) occur.

Here's a great example: You've been trying to lose weight (and keep it off) for literally years. Every pound lost = a step closer. Losing all 30 pounds ... that may seem like the big picture, but it's actually not. Keeping the weight off (and being happy / functional at that weight) is the big picture. So, every time you've lost the weight, you've regained some or all of it – you've fallen. But if you've *fallen forward every time* (learned something that makes it easier to lose the weight, gotten stronger and more motivated, despite the setbacks), then big picture is still firmly in your sights.

Life is a journey, but it doesn't always go in a single direction, particularly when it comes to our successes. There are twists, turns and downright fall-flat-on-our-face moments that can make us give up. Just remember that as you start to fall, always fall forward; it may seem like a failure, but you'll always end up closer to your destination.

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