



How to Turn Defeat into Victory

I'll never forget it. We were training for a week in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, an ancient city in Eastern Europe. We had a couple of hours to kill so we visited the old city. The streets in Old Sarajevo are too narrow for vehicles. The air is filled with smoke because many people still burn wood for heat. And everywhere you look you see towering minarets, a constant reminder that you are now in Eurasia, far from home. Walking the cobbled streets of Old Sarajevo makes you feel like you have been transported back in time.

Imagine my surprise when I walked into a smoke-filled café for a hot cup of Turkish coffee and heard the TV blaring in English! Back then, nobody spoke English in Sarajevo. Everyone spoke Serbo-Croatian. The TV was tuned in to ESPN! I was hooked! That cold morning I saw a commercial that I'll never forget. You've probably seen it, too. This is how the commercial went...

“Over 3000 times I've been called upon by my company to perform and I did not do what I was expected to do. Twenty-six times the company has called on me for the day's final activities and I failed. Three hundred times I've been a part of my company's total failure. And I'm still considered to be the greatest basketball player that has ever lived. I'm Michael Jordan.”

“Three thousand times I’ve been called upon to shoot the basketball at the basket and missed. Twenty six times my team has asked me to shoot the final shot in the game and I missed. I’ve been part of over 300 losses of the Chicago Bulls.”

“Next time the Bulls play and there are two to three seconds left in the game everyone knows who will be called to take the last shot. He is not afraid of losing. He is not afraid of defeat.”

Wow! Michael Jordan’s commercial came at a good time for me. At the time, the track in Sarajevo was the fastest in the world. We reached speeds of over ninety five miles per hour from the Men’s Start. At that speed you feel like you’re a cassette player stuck on fast forward and you can’t find the stop button! I don’t know about the other guys, but I felt fear on every run. I just got myself to act in spite of fear so I could make my dream come true.

And that’s exactly what YOU need to do. *Act in spite of your fears.* Every time you do something you fear, you gain strength, confidence, courage, and faith. You must always stop and look fear in the face and do what you think you cannot do. How do you do that? Simple: by finding a dream big enough to overcome your fears; a dream that takes your breath away.

Any successful person will tell you the same thing. They’ll tell you that they failed themselves to success. I have taken a couple of thousand luge runs since 1984. Out of all those runs, I remember only two runs that I was really proud of. Two luge runs that I nailed! I was proud of them but even **that** is relative. I’ll bet my coach, who was a three-time World Champion, thought that even those two runs were nothing to brag about! But you know what? Those two thousand “failures” got me to the Olympics three times. I failed my way to success. You could say I crashed my way to the top!

If your dream is big enough, you’ll be able to go from one failure to another without losing enthusiasm. Before long, you’ll look back and you’ll see those failures for what they really were: success school. The failures you experience give you the education you need to begin to succeed. Once you start to succeed, the trick is to learn to go from one success to another without losing humility.

The Turkish coffee was a little strong, but I'm sure glad I walked into that Sarajevo coffee shop.

Put it into action:

Act in spite of your fears. If you do what you fear, the fear will disappear.
Double your failure rate in order to accelerate your success.

FourWinterGames.com

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