

## Live Well Be Well

### "Let's Talk Failures"

Welcome to Live Well, Be Well! A podcast where we speak candidly about all things health and well-being! My name is [Renee Dell'Acqua](#), and I'm a [Health Educator in Health Promotion Services here](#) at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, I'll be discussing how failures and setbacks are actually necessary stepping stones to our successes!

So we hope you get inspired, we hope you feel connected, and we hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

----

As human beings, the hard truth, is that we all experience failures, setbacks, and shortcomings in our lives. That's just the way that it is. And I'm sure you're well aware, just as I am, that failures can be difficult and discouraging, especially when you've put your heart and soul into something that you really wanted. Maybe you didn't get accepted into your dream grad school even though you worked hard to get there. Perhaps you didn't land that internship or research position that you believed was key to paving the way for your future career. Or maybe you and your partner realized that you wanted different things in life and even though you both loved one another you had to part ways.

Yes, failures and shortcomings can be difficult to cope with, especially in that moment. And it is valid and normal to feel sad, to feel defeated, to feel anxious, to be worried about the future. But after we've allowed ourselves to feel those valid and normal feelings, what if we looked to those failures as lessons learned, as opportunities to grow and gain wisdom, to bring about humility, to have faith in ourselves, our strengths, and our capabilities, to remain hopeful and optimistic that things will line up and your our next big success is just around the corner. The way we perceive failures deeply impacts our health and well-being, as well as our drive and motivation to keep pushing forward even when times are tough. If this sounds like it relates to resilience, it's because it does. Again, resilience is our ability to bounce back from hardships and adversity. And a huge part of this is how we perceive and cope with those experiences.

Let's do a visualization exercise to give us a better understanding of how our perceptions of failure can either inhibit or facilitate our growth and our ability to push forward.

So let's imagine failures and setbacks as building blocks. Now let's say we have Person A and Person B who come from comparable backgrounds, both have experienced similar types and quantities of failures and set back in their lives. But each person assesses these experiences in very different ways and utilizes these blocks to construct very different things.

Person A stacks up their building blocks vertically, and it becomes a fear-inducing and daunting tower rising high above them. As they scan these blocks from the bottom up -- they feel overwhelmed, discouraged, and defeated. They're thinking how will I ever succeed in anything? Look at how high these failures rise. And a shadow is constantly cast upon them.

And then there's Person B. They take each block and arrange each and every failure and setback into a staircase. They begin to climb this staircase, not knowing exactly what's ahead but being excited, being filled with wisdom and humility from those lessons learned, maybe they're a little anxious, but still they know that they're climbing towards something greater than they ever imagined. So while Person A stacks up their blocks vertically into an unnerving tower, Person B stacks their blocks into a staircase knowing that each failure, setback, and shortcoming is leading the way to their next big success.

So my question for you is this: Are you utilizing the failures and setbacks you've experienced thus far in life to build a staircase that will lead you to your next big success? Or are you constructing an unnerving tower that cast a shadow of doubt about your strengths and abilities, fear of taking risks and pursuing the unknown, or uncertainty that successes may not be in your future?

With each failure, think about questions like these: "what can I learn from this?" "how will I grow from this?" "With this door now closed, what other door has opened?" Failure is an inevitable part of our human existence, and it's ok! If we experienced nothing but successes would we be truly grateful and proud of our accomplishments? Probably not. Would we miss opportunities to learn and to grow? To be better versions of ourselves? The answer is probably yes. So while failures and setbacks can be difficult to handle, know that they open up the doors for you to strengthen your resilience, to help you grow and become even wiser and stronger than before, and lastly, they act as stepping stones to the inevitable successes that

lie ahead. Always remember Tritons, you all are capable of greatness and success is just around the corner.

---

So that concludes this episode of Live Well, Be Well! If you like what you heard today and would like to learn more about topics related to health and well-being, there's much more to come!

Please be sure to check out our website [healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu](http://healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu) and also follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @UCSDHPS. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well.

Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.