

Removing Failure is a Recipe for Disaster

Today, my Momentum Dash had a quote:

“What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?”

This question has the same danger as, “What would you do if money were no object?” Sure, sometimes imagining a world without scarcity can open new mental vistas, but the lurking implication that activities would be easier or better absent risk is faulty.

I know, you’re supposed to get your answer to what you’d do in a risk free world and use that as a guide for what to do in this one. But more often, daydreaming about the person you imagine you’d be if choices had no cost leads to lazy bitterness about the real world of trade-offs. It lulls you into thinking that your goals would be better achieved with fewer risks and costs. This is never true. The only kind of person sturdy enough to handle big success is the kind who became sturdy by going through all the shit it took to get there.

Remember the scene in “The Dark Knight Rises” where Bruce Wayne is trying to escape from a hole in the ground prison? He can’t make the jump as long as the safety harness is tied around him. He’s only capable of his full physical prowess when death is a real alternative. Like it or not, that’s the way it works.

So if risk and scarcity and challenge weren’t an object, what would you do? Whatever it is, you’d do it at less than your peak potential, which is only accessible in the face of real hardship.

Don’t long for a frictionless life. You’d atrophy.