

# You Will Never Succeed If You Can't Forgive Yourself

"Forgive yourself."

I used to think that this was advice for the weak. Even now it seems like an easy way out from guilt or failure.

But I'm learning something about growth and improvement: getting back on the horse after failure is half the battle. And for any person trying to mount back up after a failure, the greatest obstacles are usually just guilt or shame.

Maybe you don't continue down the freelancer path because the last graphic design piece you turned in accidentally including an unflattering picture of your cat. Maybe you don't get back into sports because you let down your last team in your epic Quidditch match against Slytherin. Maybe you don't venture back into finance because you lost an embarrassing amount of money "investing" in merchandise from the 2005 Dreamworks film "Madagascar."

All stupid mistakes. But in all of these cases, there are probably no external factors keeping you from starting over. You're dealing with shame and guilt alone.

This is when you must realize that, self-forgiveness, far from being an easy way out, is your only weapon.

There's only so much guilt or shame you can take before you start to freeze. The role of self-forgiveness isn't self-absolution. Self-forgiveness is just there to give you enough innocence and freedom (the opposite of guilt and shame) to power through to the next failure.

Your self-forgiveness can be based on any number of things, but I find simply that acknowledging my trajectory makes it easier. I wouldn't need to forgive myself if I wasn't growing toward the good. But I am – and so **\*in service of the good (and not of myself)\*** I can give myself the innocence and freedom I need to try again.

Far from being "soft," self-forgiveness gives the mental toughness for you carry on. You won't be able to move on from failures without it, and so you certainly won't succeed in a life half made of falls and recoveries.

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