

TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H.

Motive. Inspire. Grow.

A Negative Thought is Like a Bull in A China Shop

I once heard a saying that the most valuable place in the world was the graveyard. The more I think about this, the more it makes sense to me. So many incredible people with all different talents and dreams never took the steps necessary to share their imagination with the world before they died and most often, I presume, that was due to the fear of failure. We live in a society where negativity surrounds us, and failure is often perceived as a bad thing. We believe that if we try something and fail, we are now at a disadvantage with our peers. We establish dreams and ambitions over the course of our lifetimes, but we often allow the fear of failing to prevent us from taking the necessary actions needed to make those dreams a reality.

We convince ourselves that the chance of failing is not worth the possibility of success. Regardless of whether we dream of starting our own business, writing a book, becoming a professional athlete, obtaining a promotion, learning a new skill or picking up a new hobby, the negative thoughts regarding the likelihood of failure seem to come so much more naturally than the confidence in our ability to succeed.

At the risk of oversimplification, I relate negativity and filling our minds with negative thoughts to letting a bull into a China shop. It reeks absolute chaos and damage to the most fragile parts of our mind; our self-confidence, personal pride and motivation, until we change the way we think. It doesn't take long to cause damage either. Once the "bull enters the shop" it damages everything until it's let out. The moment we let that first negative thought into our mind it becomes so much more instinctual to think negatively in the future until we let that thought out. Negativity will continue to poison our minds until we find the courage to think differently. When you convince yourself that you can't do something that becomes your new reality until you decide to believe something different. Being negative is easy and often instinctual when significant personal risk is involved because we want to protect ourselves from the disappointment of falling short of what we set out to achieve. It's easier to convince ourselves that we can't do something than it is to prove to ourselves that we can. It's even common to ask ourselves questions like what will happen if we fail. Or what happens if we start chasing our ambitions and things don't go our way? What if the world judges us because we want to live a different life than society expects us to? We often tell ourselves that the likelihood of failure is greater than the chances of success and that makes trying not worth the effort.

But the fear of failure is nothing new to me. I feared failing when I left for college, then when I dropped out of college to enlist in the Army, when I proposed to Kelsey Rose and when I bought my first home because there was overwhelming pressure on me to succeed. What if Kelsey Rose said no? What if I bought my house and then my circumstances changed? What if I joined the Army and hated it? It's easy to lean towards wondering what happens if things go wrong instead of anticipating things going right. But I've come to realize that if we let the fear of failure prevent us from taking chances in life then we've lost before we even get started. If you never try than there's 100% chance things won't go your way. Regardless of whether we fail or not, at least trying gives you a fighting chance to live the life you want to live. Honestly, I believe that failure plays a critical role in our path to finding success, but this hasn't always been my belief.

A few years ago, a soldier of mine uttered six words that will forever be etched in my mind when he found out I was writing my first book, "What if no one reads it?" I will never forget that day because his words were almost enough to stop me from writing forever. I remember sitting in my barracks room in thinking, "Shit. What if he's right. What if no one reads it?". I questioned whether it was worth it to even write the book if there no was guarantee it would succeed but the more I thought about it, the more the bull in a China shop analogy made sense. Well, what if? What if I spent all of those days and nights chipping away at writing a book and it sucked? What if I published it and never sold a copy? What if it flopped and I embarrassed myself? My mind was instantly flooded with negativity and it destroyed any progress I had made building confidence in my ability to succeed. I wanted to write that book so badly, but the fear of failure was almost enough to stop me from trying. Within a matter of moments, any self-confidence that I had regarding my ability to succeed was diminished. It doesn't take time to cause damage with negativity; it happens within moments.

Honestly, his words that day may have been enough for me to give up entirely had I not been so accustomed to failing. The only reason I kept writing was because I had failed at so many things in my past that I thought to myself, what was one more failure? If I wanted to write the book, who cared if anyone read it, I was doing it for me with the hopes of helping others. I have failed at so many things in my life that I've come to realize failing is so much better than saying "I wish I tried". Nobody likes to fail, especially me, but what if people like Martin Luther King let the fear of failure stop them from trying? How different would our world be? Does the fear of failure outweigh the benefits of trying? Every person must answer that for themselves but TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. challenges us to make the difficult choices in life for the right reasons. When you understand the reasons why you set out to achieve something then failure just becomes a speed bump in your path to accomplish it. I started writing to share my message with the world. If my first book sucked, so what? I would learn from it and write another that was 10x better.

One thing I can guarantee you is that if your heart tells you that you want something, it won't go away until you try for it. Only then will you know for sure if it was meant to be. I am terrified of failing but the day I heard those six words changed my life forever because it changed the way I see failure. Negativity destroys progress until you change the way you

think. The moment I changed the way I thought about the book was the moment my self-confidence came back. When I truly started to submerge myself in the belief that I could succeed I began believing it. Once you let that first negative thought enter your mind, it causes absolute chaos until you let it out but when you start thinking positively it paves the road to success and happiness. Telling yourself you are not good enough or not capable of something before you ever try is enough to poison your mind forever – if you let it. But positivity is the ultimate fertilizer. When you tell yourself you will fail, you will fail. But when you prepare yourself for success it becomes inevitable. Things don't always go our way on the first try because life would be boring if it did. When I wrote my book, I set out to complete something, and I did. It was far from perfect, full of grammatical error and mistakes, but complete. I was new to writing but had to start somewhere. If you never start; it's impossible to finish. Regardless of how difficult the beginning of my writing career was, it served its purpose. It opened the door to bigger and better things. It gave me confidence to write more, create my website, develop TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. and write my second book.

When you convince yourself that you are capable of whatever you set out to achieve you magnify your capabilities exponentially. When you make the choice to think positively, failure becomes your friend. You stop fearing failure because you'll see it as an opportunity to learn. If you try and fail with the right mindset, you now have an opportunity to make adjustments before you try again which significantly increasing your likelihood of success. I don't make millions of dollars (yet), but I spend every day doing what makes me happy. I married the woman of my dreams (because I took the risk to propose) and we live in a beautiful home together because we took the leap to purchase it but that required sacrifice and personal risk. I continue to make mistakes every day, but I choose to see them as opportunities to learn and make myself better. I use failure as a way to build self-confidence and test my dedication. I don't have the expectation to be perfect, I just expect myself to be better each day. That is what TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. is.

The more I thought about my soldier's words that day, the less I cared if anyone read my book because at least I could say I tried. I wasn't doing it to impress other people, I was writing because it's what my heart wanted. Chase the life you want to live, regardless of what other people think. Don't let people's opinions hold you back from chasing your dreams or prevent you from trying. TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. is often found in the moments where we risk the most. The feeling you receive after accomplishing a goal will forever outweigh the risk of failing. Once you taste success you will embrace the value of failure along the way. Life isn't about not making mistakes, it's about learning from those mistakes and constantly pursuing better. Your heart won't lie to you. Life may not always go accordingly to plan but obstacles are easier to overcome than regret. If the life you want to live requires you to make changes, now is the time to start. Write your goals down on paper and hang them up for you to see every day because they are only out of reach if you never try.

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— ★ MOTIVATE. INSPIRE. GROW. ★ —