

Episode 053: Get Rid of Disappointment Once and For All

Dear Iron Man Maryland Athletes:

Due to projected flooding from abnormally high tides, heavy rain, wind, and the expected impact of Hurricane Joaquin, Iron Man Maryland will not take place this Saturday. Given the severity of the expected weather conditions, which may, depending on the path of Joaquin, require the evacuation of certain coastal regions on the Delmarva Peninsula.

We cannot guarantee that public safety officials will be able to provide the support necessary for the safe execution of our event. The safety of our athletes, volunteers, spectators, and staff is our number one priority.

We are asking all athletes to not travel to Maryland, since forecasts expect heavy weather impact in the area. We appreciate your understanding, and will be in further communication with you.

This is the TD Fitness Podcast with Coach T. Episode number 53.

Welcome to the TD Fitness Podcast, giving you healthy living insights for your physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Now, your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T.

That was the e-mail I received three days prior to the race date in 2015. Imagine my disappointment, right? After having driven halfway up the East Coast to reach the race destination. After having trained for 10 months for my first full Iron Man event. After spending 20 hours in the pool, riding over 1,000 miles over 76 hours of training on my bike, and running 189 miles over the course of 40 hours ... That was the amount of training I had put in over the past 10 months. Then I get the word that the race will not happen.

Now, there is a somewhat happy ending to that story. The race was subsequently rescheduled for a couple of weeks later, and I completed my first Iron Man race. Why do I bring this up? Well, I received a similar e-mail just last week for an Iron Man event that was supposed to take place in Wilmington, North Carolina, this weekend. The race was canceled due to the effects of a significant storm that had come through the region a couple of weeks ago.

At the end of the day, I know there are things that are much more important than the race, or than a fitness event, and our thoughts and prayers are certainly with all of those who have been negatively effected by those storms. But it doesn't make it much easier for me to handle the disappointment associated with the anticipation and the subsequent cancellation of something that I spent so much time training for.

Now, whether you're talking about an event being canceled, or a promotion that maybe you thought you should have gotten at work, or unexpected weight gain, or failure to lose the weight you were trying to lose, or disappointments associated with your family, or folks letting you down, or any other type of disappointment ... while they all have varying levels of severity, disappointments are a part of life. Much like our discussion on stress in episode number 52, the last episode, we can't control the stressors, or in this case, the disappointing circumstances, but we can affect how we react to those things.

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How does this relate to your physical health and well-being? In the FitLife Program, in literally the very first lesson, one of the things that I state is that "You are exactly where you are supposed to be." When it comes to life events and past experiences, or whether we're talking about past successes or past failures ... Things that went your way, and things that didn't go your way ... It all is a part of a journey. It's all important.

We often get wrapped up in the setbacks and the disappointments we face, and it's natural to do that, I think. I mean, it's just human nature to tend to focus on the negatives. I mean, you could have a dozen good things happen to you today, and one setback that occurs, that will be what weighs on your mind. That will be what you talk about, and how you remember this day.

Even in the news, and on TV, it's the negative news that draws us in. It's the negative news that we tend to talk about. But every now and then, you'll catch an inspiring story on TV, or someone will pass one along to you, and it serves as a reminder that life isn't all about the bad. It's not all about the negative, or about the setbacks, or about the disappointments.

There are hundreds of stories, for example, of amazing progress in weight loss, and in living healthier. Personally, I could give you several just from my interaction, working with those who have struggled with losing weight. There's one individual who just completed the FitLife Program, and one thing that she shared with me regarding her success ... She lost about 20 pounds or so over the course of the program, but more importantly, she said, was the fact that the FitLife Program helped her to understand that the things that prevented her from moving forward in previous attempts at weight loss and at healthy living ... they were all a part of the journey. Those ups and downs are literally a part of the trip. They're a part of life, and all of that is valuable when you decide to move forward.

They did reschedule that Iron Man race in 2015, and when I traveled back up to participate, you better believe that I had a renewed appreciation for being there. I was there, and there were some athletes who had traveled from different parts of the world to race, and they just couldn't make the trip back. They had traveled from Europe, or from Africa, or from Australia, and it was just too much to make another trip all the way to the United States for the race. That disappointment of having the race postponed was an integral part of my being able to complete that 140 mile event, and it was an important part of my journey.

When it comes to the mental aspect of dealing with disappointment, I mentioned that we can't necessarily control the disappointing circumstances that come about, but we can affect how we react to those things, right? One example that comes to mind is a certain part of my military training, and specifically evaluations. Flight evaluations, if you will. We call them check rides.

A check ride can be equated to a final exam, if you will. Every year, we as pilots have to be evaluated on our ability to fly the airplane. That typically takes place with the person being evaluated, and an evaluator pilot. I've been on both sides of it, right? I've been an evaluator pilot. I've been the one evaluating people to make sure that they have the proper training, and that they can perform all the maneuvers they need to. But more often than that, I've been the person being evaluated.

Your goal, when you're being evaluated on those annual check rides, is to fly the perfect ride. You want to have the perfect flight. But no ride is perfect. No flight is perfect. You will make mistakes. In many ways, check rides are just as much a check of how you respond to those mistakes, and the things that don't go your way ... those unanticipated things.

It's just as much a check on that as it is a check in your ability to fly the airplane, because if you dwell on the past, you cannot continue to fly effectively or safely. You have to move on. Literally the safety of your crew and your passengers depends on that. That's a lesson that I think applies in life as well, because if you dwell on the negatives, they will hamper your ability to move forward.

How does all this relate to the social or family aspect of our lives. I really think that there are a lot of different areas where these concepts can be applied. As a parent, for example, I pay a lot more attention to expectations, to the behaviors, and my responses to those behaviors that our children exhibit.

A friend of mine recently directed me to a podcast called the EntreLeadership Podcast. I was listening to one of the episodes of that podcast, and this particular episode was about personality styles. In fact, I'll link to it in the show notes. But in this episode, they talked about how much of a role personality types play in leadership, when you can understand the personalities of your teams and the people that you lead.

It also discussed children, using the examples of the grades your kids may bring home from school. For example, if your son or daughter brings home two As, a B, a C, and two Fs, what is it that you focus on? What is your direction then, to your child? For most parents, it's to harp on the two Fs, right? Because we want to get rid of the Fs. We want to make sure the grades come up.

But what if, instead, we focused on the As? This is what the podcast pointed out. If we understood that the As may actually represent the subjects where our kids are naturally gifted, so instead of putting all the focus on bringing them up to average in the things that don't and maybe won't ever come naturally to them, we can take that opportunity to focus on the good part of that scenario. The As. When we focus on those positives, especially among those who are close to us, our families, our spouse, our children, it builds stronger relationships and makes them more likely to succeed.

How does disappointment play a role in my spiritual life? I'll share a very personal story. I'll start by stating that because of my faith, I believe that everything happens for a reason, and is a part of God's plan. The story I'd like to tell is that of my mom's passing. She died on March 21st, 2017. About a year and a half ago.

My mother, before she passed, was in the hospital for over a month. She had had a series of strokes at that point. She was 73 years old, lived a long and full life, right? It was such a blessing. I was fortunate to be able to take time away from work for almost all of that whole period while she was in the hospital. About a month or so.

Eventually, though, we had to move her to hospice care, to a hospice home, and she remained there for about two weeks. I was still there with her the entire time. I had told my boss that I wanted to see this through. I felt like I needed and wanted to be there when she passed, because I had been with her the whole time.

But eventually, it got to the point where I had to get back to work. I mean, we're going on six weeks now, and I had been essentially away from my job for that long. My mom was in Virginia. She was in Richmond, Virginia, and I was living and working in Alabama at the time. I made the decision to go back to work, and within 48 hours of me driving back from Virginia to Alabama, my wife called and said that I should probably head back to Virginia. There were signs that my mother was probably not going to make it through the day.

I went through a couple of iterations of travel plans. I was able to get a flight on a pretty short notice. Now, there are a lot of other pertinent details to this story about the way God worked in my life then, and maybe I'll share those with you in another podcast or something, but I'll stick to the big-picture details here. Long story short, I arrived in Virginia. I flew into Richmond, Virginia, and arrived sometime after 4:00 p.m. that day. I made my way to the hospice center, only to arrive three minutes after my mother had passed.

French novelist Marc Levy is quoted as saying, "If you want to know the value of one year, just ask a student who failed a course. If you want to know the value of one month, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby. If you want to know the value of one hour, ask the lovers waiting to meet. If you want to know the value of one minute, ask the person who just missed the bus, and if you want to know the value of one second, ask the person who just escaped death in a car accident. If you want to know the value of one one-hundredth of a second, ask the athlete who won a silver medal in the Olympics."

I will tell you that if you want to know the value of three minutes, you can ask me, because I often wonder what if I had had a little more of a tailwind on that plane ride back to Virginia? Or what if my luggage had come out a little bit quicker at the terminal? Or what if I hadn't taken that wrong turn on the way from the airport to the hospice care center? Three minutes. Three minutes is nothing, right? But in that instance, for me, it was everything.

How did I react? How could I react? Well, I could be disappointed, or I could rest assured knowing that in God's plan, everything happens according to his will and for his purpose. I can accept that without any kind of animosity, and without disappointment. And I could be thankful that I was there to help comfort my family in that time of grief, and be thankful that I was able to spend almost two full months with my mother in her final days. I will always treasure that.

All right, so here are the takeaways from all of this. Number one, the ups and downs, those disappointments that we face in our lives are a part of the journey, and they are an important part. Number two, do not dwell on the negatives. If you do, they will hamper your ability to move forward. Number three, spend some time focusing on the good, and not dwelling on the bad. Number four, understand that everything has a purpose, and it's up to us to find value in it all, even when we are disappointed. Especially when we are disappointed.

Before I sign off, just a reminder that the show notes for this episode can be found at tdfitness.net/053. Don't forget, too, if you have a question or topic related to health, fitness, nutrition, or wellness in any area of your life, then drop me a line.

888-TDFIT-01, or 888-833-4801. You can select option three, that goes directly to our Question Line. You can just leave a message there. Leave a question there, and I'll get it and answer your question probably on the air. You can also e-mail me a question at tdfitness.net/contact. I love addressing what is on your mind, so please hit me up. I encourage you.

Finally, I mentioned the FitLife Program earlier in this episode. You can find out more at tdfitness.net/fitlife, or go to fitlifeprogram.com. You'll also hear a short clip on the program right after this.

As always, thank you all so much for tuning in. I appreciate your listener support. I want you to have a blessed one. Coach T, out.

Why did I create the FitLife Program? I wanted to provide something that wasn't just for weight loss, not just for feeling better, not even just for better health. I wanted a more

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complete solution. I also wanted to make it sustainable. It's not just about starting something, or sticking with it for a month or two.

Healthy living, which includes fitness, nutrition, and a healthy mindset, is about practicing healthy habits consistently. Not all the time, because no one is perfect. But practicing those healthy habits more than you are right now. That's how change begins, and that's how healthy living continues.

Find out more at fitlifeprogram.com, or tdfitness.net/fitlife.