

Get Out of Your Way – Let the Past Go

You are exactly where you're supposed to be right now. Be it physically, mentally or emotionally, you're right where you should be. Maybe you take that statement at face value and can get behind it...agree with it. Or maybe you don't know if that's true...maybe you even disagree. But whatever your thoughts are on that statement, what is absolutely true is that those thoughts define how you see yourself, your ability to grow and change, and how you view the past...more than you know. So, let's talk about the past.

Your past experiences, successes, and frustrations, have brought you right here and right now. Some of us have a tendency to view our past attempts in a negative light. We think back to attempts at better living, better relationships, better health, personal or professional goals that are still unmet...and we tend to judge who we are by what we did or didn't accomplish. And this is normal, I supposed. I mean, we have been conditioned through society to judge everything. To score everything. To classify everything that we do in one of two binary categories...the win column and the loss column. But there's more beyond just what we did or didn't do. There's a subconscious component, a belief about ourselves and our abilities that doesn't just end with that thought or feeling of success or failure in that one attempt. It goes beyond that thing, if you will, to a broader feeling of our self-worth, and our perceived ability to succeed at any or everything. Our reference to past attempts affects us, both consciously and subconsciously.

But here's what I want you to know right now. YOU define who you are and how you view yourself. And that means you can change the reflection of who you see in the mirror right now...through a simple mindset shift. I know it doesn't always seem that easy, but if thoughts of why you can't do something are based on what's happened in the past, you absolutely have the power to change that. And you can do that right now. And it starts with accepting your current place in life, on your path or however you view this journey. Because when you accept that, when you say, "I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be right now," "I'm supposed to be at this job," "I'm supposed to be in this health condition," "I'm supposed to be here by my mother as she takes the final breaths of life," (I'm speaking from experience now...I've been there)...when you accept your current place in time, three things happen. First, you free yourself of past outcomes and regrets, because you realize that you're in the right place in life now. Secondly, it removes the anticipation of whether you're making the right decision or not in the moment. "I am where I am" is freeing in that sense. Finally, when you break the shackles of the past, you're free to run into the future with anticipation, not regret.

Let the past go, accept where you are, and you can grow and improve in any area of your life that you choose. Think about it this way...we tend to amplify the negatives and suppress the positives when it comes to our own self-image. If you smoke from time to time, something that I'd venture to say that most would consider an unhealthy habit, you may be considered a smoker, right? We amplify the negatives. Yet if you only run from time to time, you're not considered a runner - not unless you run regularly and consistently. We suppress the positives in life. We all have these definitions of who we are, but the

definitions are created or perceived in our minds. But again, you define who you are. If you want to be someone who eats better, decide that now and be that person. If you want to be someone who exercises more, decide that and be that. Your mindset controls what you can do. The past does not.

I get it...we're our own toughest critics. But you have to let the past go in order to move forward. But before you do that, don't let it go completely. Our past experiences also have benefit if used and thought of through the right lens.

What is the past good for? What are our experiences (both positive and negative experiences) good for? Well, look at it this way. Your past attempts at everything you've done in life have helped shape who you are and how you think right now. And you can (and should) use all of that to inform how you move forward. The past doesn't determine what your next outcome will be. But you can certainly use that knowledge to improve, because past attempts are gifts. They truly are. They're gifts of learning. We can take our experiences, even negative ones, especially negative ones, get rid of the regret and look at it as preparation. So, what you tried didn't work. You now know to approach things a little bit differently next time. Don't let your negative thoughts about past attempts get you down. Use what you've learned to your advantage.

I will tell you that in my life, though letting go of the past is not always easy, it is made easier through my faith and my understanding of God's forgiveness of our sins. That is reason enough for me to let go of past negativity, and to accept the gift of forgiveness, even though I'm not deserving. God knows and has orchestrated the plan for you and for me. The past doesn't define me. God does. And how I live is a manifestation of that destiny.

So, I have a question for you. What are you holding on to? What guilt can you free yourself of? What can you let go of? I'd love for you to stop saying to yourself, "I'm sorry that this happened," or "I regret that this didn't work for me," or "I can't do this because I've never been able to before." Be unapologetic about putting those thoughts in the rear view mirror. We're looking forward now. There's a commercial that I've seen a few times recently where a lady comes in with a bag looking to return her negative self-talk that she picked up from social media. Your past doesn't define you. Your mindset sets the stage for who you are going forward. and the good thing is that you have more control over your mindset than you give yourself credit for. Ask yourself, what hasn't worked for you before? Why? What can you change this time?

So, what's the takeaway? Again, you are exactly where you're supposed to be right now. Your past experiences, whether you view them as successes or frustrations, have brought you to the place where you are right now. It's all a part of your journey, your story...and now you're here in your present state. Your current fitness level. Your current eating habits. Current stress levels. You're the parent and spouse that you are. And you're in the place where you are with your faith. As you look to grow in these areas, don't view your current state, situation or circumstance negatively. Simply accept that you're here now, and for good reason. Because right now, in this moment you are more equipped to shape your future self than ever before. So, use the tools you have, that you've acquired through the ups and downs to live

a healthier, more balanced life. And no one else has more power or know-how to get you there than you do. You're the most qualified, and you can do this.

That's it. A rather short rant this week. More of a reminder that we are more powerful than we think. We just have to get out of our way sometimes.

As always, thanks for listening. Coach T, out.