

## Failure or Winner?

*Rose Jonas, Ph.D.*

You are in the midst of a project that's not going the way you wanted it to go, and I've heard you say a couple of times, "I feel like such a failure." As of today, please think of something else to say, like, "We're gonna get through this okay, maybe better than we were before." This project is indeed spiraling to a fiery crash, but you are not a failure. Once this is over, we can analyze the ashes to see what you learned and how you can improve. We can also do some chanting ritual — complete with smudge smoke and stomping feet — to clear the ghosts of this experience from your business. For now, however, make sure that nasty little "failure" wasp isn't allowed to land on your nose.

Imagine you're an Olympian contender. You know how good your competition is. You've worked your way up to the Number 4 slot, and you really want to wear one of those top three medals. You just came in Number 4 at a qualifying trial, within a second of Number 3's time. How much time do you think your coach will let you spend viewing yourself as a failure? Not even for the one second that separates you from Number 3. (a) Your coach will fear creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, which can be quite powerful. (b) The place to put your attention right now is how to close the gap: stroke, leg movement, etc. **THERE IS NOTHING TO GAIN BY REPEATING NEGATIVE MESSAGES.**

You've got challenging weeks ahead of you, from which you will emerge with calluses and scars, the mark of any champion. I will work with you to blow away those "I'm a failure" feelings. Your energy is better spent visualizing coming out of this successfully, plowing through what has to be done, remembering your championship record, and remembering, too, how many cheerleaders, fans, trainers, and coaches also believe in you.

This is an enormous learning experience for you. Slogging through is where the champion is made, not doing the Nike commercial.

See you in the winner's circle.

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