

Reframing and Refining Our Disappointments

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These last 12 months have been filled with disappointments.

- Losing a job.
- A loved one passing away.
- Not being able to get vaccinated, and getting vaccinated later

Events like these can send us into a downward spiral that lasts for days, weeks, months or even years.

And, when enough disappointments stack up, some people give up on their dreams entirely.

So Why are Disappointments so Powerful?

The answer lies in the meaning we give to them. (And by “meaning”, I mean the beliefs’ that are reflected in our self-talk.)

In other words, while not getting what we want can feel horrible, the intensity of our feelings is exponentially magnified by what we are saying to ourselves.

Therefore...a disappointment can be devastating, or an opportunity for something better.

It is OUR choice!

So here are four ways to reframe and redefine our disappointments: Globalizing, Personalizing, Labeling, and Learning.

1. The Danger of Globalizing Them.

Globalizing a disappointment can cause tremendous pain.

Globalizing sounds like this: “Not getting what I want means I will NEVER get what I want.”

If a relationship doesn’t work and you believe there could never be a relationship quite as wonderful, you might suffer for the rest of your life.

Instead, remind yourself that just because it didn't work out this time doesn't mean the future won't be different. While some people like to say the past is the best predictor of the future, the reality is, the future comes from what WE choose to do next. (And yes, dear reader, it is a choice we can make!)

2. Personalizing your Disappointments.

Another common way to make disappointments feel bigger is to *personalize* them. Personalization sounds like this: "Not getting what I want means that somehow I am not good enough and don't deserve it."

Over personalizing a disappointment makes it about who you are as a person. It does not take into account the situational factors that had *nothing to do with you*.

Face it! Life can be hard, and it has *nothing* to do with who you are!

If you apply for a job but don't receive an interview, there were likely many qualified applicants for the position, or maybe they had already planned to hire someone before the job was even listed.

Additionally, a situation NOT working out the way you want it to says nothing about your worthiness. While there may be some things you did to influence the situation, realize that it was just ONE event.

Events are what we experience; NOT who we are.

3. Labeling Them as "Bad."

Many people automatically assume that if something they don't want happens to them, it's somehow a "bad" thing. If you don't get a job, you may think no one will ever hire you and you will be stuck living with your parents forever.

Thinking this way makes us feel awfully bad!

However, disappointing situations often have the potential to open the door to new events in our lives that we do want.

If you miss your plane, you may end up meeting the love of your life on a different flight. If you lose your job and are forced to move to a new city, you may meet a great new set of friends, or find your dream home.

I was 62 when I lost a teaching job at the beginning of the Great Recession. I was devastated, for I was learning how to teach my students to change the way they think.

So a couple of months later, I took my message to the Santa Rosa Senior Center, and then all the Senior Centers in Sonoma County; all for free because they *loved* this message.

I have now taught it around the world! And this blog is going out to thousands.

Wow!

4. Learn from the Disappointments.

More often than not, success is built on failure. When you read the biographies of great leaders, it is AMAZING how often they “failed.”

- Michael Jordan initially did not make his high school basketball team.
- Steven Spielberg was rejected by the University of Southern California film school three times.
- The Beatles were rejected by three different record companies before they were signed.
- The book *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was reportedly rejected by publishers a total of 123 times. The series has sold more than 80 million copies.

There are thousands of stories just like these.

What helped these people become successful was that they didn't allow the disappointment of rejection to keep them from trying again...and again...and again. And most importantly, they learned from each attempt how to improve and what they could do differently the next time.

Sometimes we aren't yet ready for what we want, but the process can get you ready when YOU allow it to.

So when you take disappointments as opportunities to REFRAME AND REDEFINE YOURSELF, YOU GROW!

Wow again!!