

Rising to the challenge

I remember seeing a movie once that involved hurdling. The movie was a comedy, and as a group of hurdlers came around the track, racing toward the finish line and jumping over the hurdles, our comedian raced down the track, and went around, not over each hurdle.

Although I admire the comedian's out-of-the-box approach to the problem, it's too indicative of the too many people's response to the problems facing them in life -- they ignore them, and just go around.

Many people won't see the difficulty to this -- after all, sometimes, the proper response to problems is to find a way around them.

But for most of us, when we don't rise to the challenges in life -- whether they be hurdles on a track, obstacles in our way, or things we must learn, we wind up settling for a diminished self -- we wind up settling as less than we may become.

When we ignore the challenges in our lives, the person who is punished is us.

Think about it. When you take the easy way, you don't learn. You don't grow. You aren't challenged, so you never have to rise to the occasion.

I don't know about you, but I tend to learn a lot more from my struggles than I do from the things that come easy to me. I'm not saying it should be that way, mind you -- we should develop those areas that come easy to us -- but as I look back on my life, I've learned a whole lot from the mistakes that I've made.

That's good -- I've made a whole lot of mistakes.

People were never made to have everything come easily to them. People learn most completely by struggling against their challenges, and overcoming them -- improving themselves in the process.

Most of us have heard the story about the baby chick which seemed to be having a hard time breaking out of the egg. A well-meaning bystander "helped" the chick -- but without the struggle, and the strengthening that goes with it, the chick soon died.

We gain muscle mass by exercising -- struggling against gravity or a force of some kind. We gain education by exercising our mind -- learning is a type of

struggling -- we try to gain an understanding of the concepts that will make us better. Even our emotional selves become better by struggling -- we become better by confronting our demons and the challenges in our life.

We become greater by forcing ourselves to rise to a greater height. Few who have ever climbed to the top of a mountain regret doing so -- but many who wimped out at the bottom, or who gave up partway to the top, regret their decision for the rest of their lives.

We are people who exist to be challenged.

We become great by confronting our challenges.

And no matter how difficult our lives may become, we will become greater for it -- if we choose to leap the hurdles in our lives, rather than taking the easy way around.

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