

## Flip Your Karma: 8 Tricks to Turn the Bad Into the Awesome

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“Fall seven times, stand up eight.” - **Japanese proverb**

It’s inevitable: sometimes, life just doesn’t go your way.



Photo courtesy of [Saudi...](#)

Your schedule gets all messed up. You fail to follow your exercise plan. Someone is mean to you. You feel like quitting something. You want to curl into a little ball and cry.

Life deals out its blows, and leaves us discouraged, angry, frustrated, depressed, drained. And once we’re in that bad place, in a mood where we just don’t care about anything, it’s pretty hard to get out of it.

But let me share a little secret to happiness and self-improvement here: all that stuff? It’s just in your head.

Yeah, it sure doesn’t seem like it. It seems that the slings and arrows of life are all coming at us. It feels like we’re a failure. But it’s true. It’s all in your mind.

How can I trivialize horrible things that happen to you like that? By making it seem like a simple mental problem? Because that’s what it is, and once you realize that, you are liberated — you have the power to change your circumstances!

It’s not an easy task, I’ll give you that. It’s incredibly, monumentally hard. Changing your mind and changing your life is a mental hurdle worthy of the titans.

But it can be done. All it takes is a few mental tricks, and a lot of energy and willingness to keep an open mind.

“Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.” - **Swedish proverb**

Let me give you an example: for the last couple years, I’ve struggled with exercise. I actually enjoy running and working out, but there are days when I don’t feel like doing a thing, or when I feel under the weather, and those days can stretch out to a week and that week can stretch into a few weeks. And then I’ve fallen off the exercise wagon and it feels like I can’t get back on.

But then I use the first couple of tricks below, and my mindset changes. I switch on the positive attitude, and realize that my failure to exercise is actually just a stepping stone to fitness success. And looking back, I’ve had 6-7

of these failures, or stepping stones, and they've all led me further down the path to fitness. Today, I exercise almost every day, and I'm loving it.

The same is true of every other success I've had. This blog, for example, is a success in my eyes, but I've had points where I was discouraged by negative comments or emails. I flipped that discouragement around, however, and used the comments to help myself improve.

I had many failures along the way to eliminating my debt, but I made it there in the end, by not quitting. I have faced many tests of my patience and character, and failed not a few of those too. But through practice, I've gotten better, and while I'm not perfect, I know that I'll only continue to improve if I keep the same mindset.

It's all in your mind. Here are 8 tricks I use to turn anything bad into something truly awesome.

1. **The power of positive thinking.** I learned the power of positive thinking while I was quitting smoking, and I used the lessons of that challenge to help me with every other challenge I've faced since. Quitting smoking, as most smokers (and ex-smokers) know, is supremely difficult. There are many times throughout each day, in the first few weeks especially, when you feel like giving up. When you want just one cigarette (which leads to two ...). When you just don't see the point of all this suffering. And yet, if you realize that it's just negative thinking, you can squash that negative thought like a little bug. Then replace it with a positive thought (I CAN do this!) and you're back on the road to success. Recognize negative thoughts, squash them, and find positive thoughts to replace them. Works every time.
2. **Failure is a stepping stone to success.** This is what I tell myself every time I fall. I get up, dust myself off, and start again. Each failure shows you an obstacle you didn't anticipate, and you can plan to beat that obstacle next time. Each failure brings you that much closer to winning. And you know what? Every single time I've told myself that, so far, it's been true. I've succeeded. Getting back up is the main thing.
3. **Practice patience.** This is what I tell myself when I get frustrated, when someone is difficult, when I begin to lose my patience. First, I vent somehow (talking to a friend or my wife is one of the best ways for me). Then, I tell myself that this is a great way for me to practice my patience. Sometimes, I have to repeat this to myself like a mantra, but it works nonetheless.
4. **Learning experience.** Similar to the "stepping stone to success" trick above, but it can be used for anything, not just failure. If I make a mistake, if I make the wrong choice, if I have a bad day ... I just see it as an opportunity to learn. Then I review it in my head, trying to figure out what went wrong, trying to learn from my mistakes. If you see learning as a wonderful thing, as I do, then you can see every mistake as a blessing.
5. **Makes you stronger.** "That which does not kill us only makes us stronger," goes the famous saying. And while that's not always true (sometimes we can be left weakened and ruined), I've found it to be true in most cases. Something is difficult? I will be a stronger person for having endured it. This has been the case for me when I went through problems as a teen-ager (I ran away from home and slept in Golden Gate Park in S.F.), when I went through a divorce seven years ago, when I had stressful and trying times at various jobs. I became a better person because of it.
6. **Test of your character.** I like tests and challenges. It motivates me to step up to another level, to see if I can meet the challenge. This is the case with my first marathon, which was very difficult for me (for various reasons). It wasn't a particularly enjoyable experience for me, but I just saw it as a test. And when I passed that test, it was a joyous thing for me. This is true any time you go through a trying time — see it as a challenge, and try to meet that challenge. And when you do, you'll feel great about yourself.
7. **Turn the other cheek.** Jesus said that instead of taking an eye for an eye, if someone hits you, just turn the other cheek. I don't know many people who can meet this monumental challenge. I've tried it. It's not easy, and the desire to avenge any wrongs is hard to quash. However, I believe that even making an effort at this will make you a better person. It goes not just for physical wrongs to you, but anything that anyone does to you. They call you a name? Thank them. There will be some people who say that you have to meet force with force, or people will walk all over you. To this I say, "Where does it end?" And I also say, "You are merely stooping to their level." Rise above the pettiness of others, and become a better human being.
8. **Love your enemy.** I wrote about this recently as one of life's greatest challenges, and it belongs on this list. When you have anger toward another human being, give this a try. If you succeed, to any degree whatsoever, you will rejoice in this success. It is a miraculous thing.

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." - **Winston Churchill**

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