

Therapist Coach Matters brings you this article about failure written by friend and colleague, Russ Volckmann, PhD. Russ talks candidly about the other side of success, and how to turn failure around. Somethings to think about as we continue our journeys through life. Enjoy, Patsi Krakoff, Editor www.therapistcoach.org, dr-patsi@coachingmatters.com

Freeing the Phoenix
by Russ Volckmann, PhD

I am a failure. I have failed in relationships. Three failed marriages. Failure as a father with two sons twenty years apart, progeny of two of these failed marriages. I failed at a university. I failed at a military academy. I failed as a son to my father who chose to die without ever seeing me again. I failed to reach my mother before she died. I failed in business. I failed in partnerships. The list goes on and on.

So begins my forthcoming book, 1 Phoenix Rising: Embracing and Transcending Failure (1st Books—release date about August 1, 2002). The book is addressed to people like me who have experienced pernicious and sometimes profound failure in their lives.

This book is titled, “1” Phoenix Rising, because I believe that confronting, embracing and transcending failure is first and foremost an individual challenge and choice. Having friends and family to support us is valuable. Sometimes that makes it easier and sometimes even more difficult. It can be a help. And it can be a hindrance. Consequently, we must fall back upon ourselves, our ways of making meaning, clarifying what is important to us and self-managing the processes of bringing integrity more and more into the relationships between what is important and what we do. Ultimately it is an individual path and it is up to us to take it.

There are so many times we are urged to “forget it” or “let it go.” We are urged to cleanse our souls, wipe the slate clean or wash that man right out of our hair. I maintain that doesn’t work. We don’t forget. The slate is never clean again. We take our life experience with us—successes and failures. We might as well befriend them as part of the portrait of our lives and use them as sources of lessons and reminders that we are in a place of choice. We choose our future, our path.

I convey an approach to working with our experiences of failure in a creative and generative way. A central tenet is that to transcend failure one must face the experience, even embrace it. Consequently, I

draw upon many approaches that I have experienced and used over the years in my own struggles with failure. Influences include Gestalt Therapy, Jungian archetypal psychology and personality theory, sensory awareness, the percept language of John Weir, guided imagery, the Integrated Strategic Intention System of Mike Jay and B\Coach Systems, extensive personal, business and executive coach training and many others.

I am not a therapist. I am a master business coach and executive coach. I have been trained in Gestalt and some other modalities but never have practiced. I am simply a failure who has had some success in engaging effectively with those experiences of failure and moving through and beyond them.

I have learned about my own meaning making process. I have learned how to renew my creative energies. I have even learned how to forgive myself. In the process I have learned how to cherish and celebrate my successes, as well. I hope this book will help others, as well.

The book will be available from www.1stbooks.com as an e-book or paperback. It will be available via Amazon and Barnes&Noble a few weeks later.