

Everything flows out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall.

Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich*, interviewed hundreds of the most successful people in the early 1900s, including Henry Ford, Thomas Edison and Andrew Carnegie. After conducting these extensive interviews, Hill observed that the greatest successes of many of these individuals came on the heels of their greatest failures and disappointments. Interesting, isn't it? Of course, the principle works the other way as well. If you have a victory, you can expect to experience a corresponding setback or difficulty. We're going to focus on the seemingly negative events that precede victories.

In an ancient text known as *The Kybalion*, there is a discussion of The Law of Rhythm, which includes the metaphor of the pendulum. The pendulum swings to the left, and then the pendulum swings to the right. This applies to all of our life experiences and moods. According to this notion, those who experience large DOWNS will eventually experience large UPS. Let's begin by looking at some examples from the world of athletics. Consider the road that the Boston Red Sox traveled to win the 2004 World Series. The Red Sox had not won a world championship in 86 years (that's since 1918!) and had suffered several agonizing playoff and World Series defeats during that long stretch. To get into the 2004 World Series, the Red Sox had to defeat the Yankees in a best of seven game series. To make matters worse, their best pitcher, Curt Schilling, sustained a serious foot injury right before the series began. The Yankees won the first three games of the series. The Yankees won Game 3 by the lopsided score of 19-8 and everyone wrote off the Red Sox at that point. Talk about being in a hole! In the history of postseason baseball, 25 teams had faced this situation, trailing 3-0. Not a single one of them had been able to win four straight games. In Game 4, the Red Sox trailed by a run

with only four outs to go in the game, and had to face one of the most dominant relief pitchers in baseball history, the Yankees' Mariano Rivera. They managed to tie the score against him and went on to win the game in extra innings. Then, they won Game 5 in Boston, bringing the series to 3-2 in the Yankees' favor. Miraculously, the Red Sox won the next two games, beating the Yankees on their home turf in New York to win the series 4-3. Boston went on to beat St. Louis four straight games to capture the World Series. Most teams - and most individuals - quit when they face difficulties like the Red Sox faced. But the Red Sox hung in and turned some huge setbacks into a never-to-be-forgotten triumph.

Another example from the world of sports is gymnast Mary Lou Retton. After training with great discipline for years leading up to the 1984 Olympics, Mary Lou suffered a knee injury just six weeks before the Olympics. She had broken cartilage in her knee and needed surgery. The doctor told her she couldn't compete in the Olympics - that she would need to rehab the knee for 3 months. Mary Lou would not accept the doctor's prediction and would not give up on a dream she had worked so hard to achieve. She completed the rehabilitation in 3 weeks - instead of 3 months - and went on to win 5 Olympic medals, including an individual gold medal. Life tested Mary Lou by throwing her a big setback at the last moment. But because of her magnificent attitude and faith, she overcame that obstacle to become an Olympic champion.

Another great athlete, Lance Armstrong, was diagnosed with cancer in 1996 and was given a 50% chance of surviving. As you know, he has now won seven consecutive Tour de France championships. From the brink of death... to one of the most impressive accomplishments in sports history. The pendulum sure took a big swing in the opposite direction in Lance's life!

You don't have to become a celebrity to activate this principle. It's at work in your life all the time. Furthermore, the concept isn't limited to monumental setbacks and disappointments.

Let's bring it a little closer to home. Ever have a relationship with someone that ended - and you were devastated - yet you went on to a better relationship?

In each case, a setback preceded a positive outcome. When you suffer a setback in your life, it's only natural to feel frustrated and disappointed. But don't let the setbacks destroy your attitude. Don't give up. Remember that difficulties precede victories.

Get excited about the possibilities that are in store when the pendulum swings back the other way. As Harriet Beecher Stowe wisely said: "When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you until it seems that you cannot hold on for a minute longer, never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

Adapted from "Yes, I Can" Volleyball

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