Failure With Honor

Have you ever heard the phrase "failing with honor"? When you fail with honor, it means "Well I didn't succeed, but I still feel pretty good about it." This *sounds* like a noble ideal. There is definitely honor in accepting failure and learning from it. However, the concept of "failure with honor" has some hidden meanings. Let me explain.

Do you remember the famous scene in "Star Wars" when Yoda says, "Do or do not—there is no try"?

What was Yoda really saying? What does it mean to not try, but to *do*?

During my coaching sessions, I hear the word "try" a lot. Clients will often say to me, "Oh, Bill I am trying *so hard* to change. I really am *trying*."

Take a moment and try this exercise—put a pen on ground and then *try* to pick it up. Go ahead, set the book aside and try it. If you still have your pen in your hand, you haven't followed the instructions. I don't want you to *actually* pick it up—I just want you to *try*. Does this make sense? *Trying* is code for *not doing*. It's an excuse, an illusion, and a mental block that stymies progress. If you are someone who "tries" to do something, you likely also say things like, "Probably I'll get it," "Maybe I'll get it," or "Well, sometimes I can get it and other times I can't."

All of these comments are really saying, "Half of me is moving forward; half of me isn't. Part of me is doing, part of me isn't. I'm *trying*." This is what it means to "fail with honor," and the only way you can move forward is to reverse this pattern. I want you to be able to wake up tomorrow and take off like a rocket ship, but first you need to eliminate this psychology from your databank forever.

What language choices do you use to hedge your bets? Write at least five examples of sentences that you use, and times that you have used them.

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Do you use different language for home, work, personal life, etc? Dig deep. You may do more at work because professional failure needs honor, where at home you may not need this – or vice versa. Look to your "weakest" moments and programs, as these hold the key.

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How do you diminish your Greatness by not absolutely guaranteeing it? (Remember, you can drop the pen – that's ok. But to *condition* yourself so that you don't ever really commit to doing it – that's failure – and not the good kind that brings growth.)

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Instead of diminishing your Greatness, what if you were to speak from *absolute commitment to success*? What new language would you use instead? Be detailed. Be specific.

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