

Two-step your way to success

Driving through the back roads on my way home from work, the check engine light illuminated on the dash again. The mechanic had repeatedly assured me everything was fine, but I worried about his comedic accusations that I'd lost my mind to some form of hypochondria. The mischievous light enjoyed mocking me and defiantly turned itself off when I made it back to the shop each time to complain. Feeling tense, I pressed the center of my glasses to nudge them closer to my eyes, turned up the music and tightened my grip on the steering wheel.

The playlist shuffled from R&B to country and pop. Reggae master Ziggy Marley emerged with "Love is my Religion" just as I reached for my vanilla latte. I blew gently before taking that first indulgent, hot sip. I couldn't help but smile, thinking how this heavenly beverage was my religion in some therapeutic way—a savory salvation bringing me into a state of Zen like nothing else.

The energizing vibes had me feeling so carefree that I veered off course and noticed a beautiful wooded park a short distance away. Impressed by the giant trees and clouds reflected in the river, my insatiable curiosity required that I explore the area, despite the chilly autumn wind.

The sun peeking through branches provided the warmth I craved. Its light radiated playfully and authoritatively, casting a golden hue on the trail as it curved and hinted at potential risk. Stirred by the inescapable crunch of leaves beneath my feet, I considered the parallel realities—just as the seasons change, so must we.

I didn't know where the path would lead, but I felt at peace with the unknown. Like pebbles traveling adventurously downstream, I knew the only constant in life was change. And those twists and turns can reveal the most intricately rewarding, empowering parts of our existence.

Discomfort, self-doubt and other unsteady feelings cannot be allowed to sabotage our success. Left unchecked, such emotions reduce our pace to a series of overly cautious, reactive steps. This hinders our ability to see the opportunities through which we can create an impact and live out our legacy intentionally.

Emotional agility, as defined by Harvard psychologist Susan David, is an imperative skill set that "builds on our ability to face emotions ... move forward deliberately ... recognize when we're feeling stressed ... and act in a way that is aligned with our personal values and goals."

Such mastery over our emotions enables our team—at work as well as home—to "become better problem solvers and engaged learners more resilient against anxiety and depression."

The next time a situation takes an unexpected turn and rocks your ability to reach for the stars that inspire you to dream, just remember you're still in control. Keep your emotions in check and continue striding toward your full potential—two steps at a time.

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