

# Reaching The End of Your Rope

Periodically, I write special Monday Motivation pieces for some of things people seem to be searching for. Unfortunately, this is one of the oft-queried topics.

What do you do when you reach the end of your rope?

If life has gotten too difficult for you to handle well, follow these simple little steps. Don't worry -- you can do it. I know all about it -- I've been there before.

## Step number 1: Never give up.

There's a popular saying that says: "When you've gotten to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on." I'll give you a couple of extensions to that advice in a second -- but to begin with, make a decision that no matter what, you'll not give up.

The main difference between success and failure is **Persistence**. Losers give up, and by doing so, lose. Winners never stop trying, no matter how difficult the situation becomes. Winston Churchill said, "Never give up. Never, never, never, never."

In the darkest days of The Battle of Britain, Churchill pulled a nation together with his dynamic words -- and that island nation defeated one of the greatest air forces of all time.

No matter how dark things become, no matter how difficult your life may be, this is your first step: never give up.

## Step number 2: Take responsibility for your future.

This brings us to the next "end of the rope" advice: "When you've reached the end of your rope, start climbing."

Frankly, it doesn't matter how you got to where you're at. The past is behind you. The trouble you were going through a minute ago is already part of your past. What matters is the following question: **Where are you going from here?**

Difficult situations happen -- they always have, and they always will -- at least as long as people are alive. **It doesn't really matter what's happened to you -- what matters is what is going to happen.**

If you've reached the end of your rope, hanging on is fine -- but it doesn't fix the problem. Start climbing -- even if you slide back down, climb again -- and again -- and again. Rest if you must, but take the responsibility for your future, and pull yourself out of your troubles.

### **Step number 3: Look for better alternatives**

Once you've decided to survive, and decided to take responsibility for your actions, now comes the final step toward your recovery: look for other alternatives, and for the opportunity in any situation.

Most people, when caught "at the end of their rope," hang there until someone helps them. Some people decide to climb. Fewer still look around to evaluate their situation.

Let me explain. If you're hanging at the end of a rope, and that rope is 500 feet above the ground -- well, you've got an entirely different problem than if that rope is only three feet from the ground.

If you're in a situation where life seems dark and dreary, and it seems you're at the end of your rope -- re-evaluate your situation. Life is rarely that dark, and even when it is, usually the dawn is on the way.

Our lives are cyclical -- we have "good" times, and we have "bad" times. It's only later that you realize you learn more from the "bad" times than you do from the "good" ones. If you're having a difficult time, ask yourself two questions:

1. What can I learn from this that can help me in the future?
2. What is the best way I can turn this difficult situation into a better one?

Why do you ask yourself these two questions? They focus on the **positive**, not the negative. They focus on growth, not stagnation; they focus on the future, not the past; they focus on resolving and learning, not sitting and weeping.

Sure -- bad things happen. They happen to all of us -- but that doesn't mean you have to let them control your life.

Look around you and see if there's a positive way out of this predicament. Turn your difficult situation into a learning experience. See the value you can gather from what you've been through -- you may only be able to offer advice to people, but if you help someone else, it'll be worth it.

#### **Step number 4: Learn from it and put it behind you.**

When you've outlasted your situation, remember to learn from experience. Wisdom is gained through two elements: experience and reflection. Examine where you went wrong. Determine how you can do better in the future. Don't let your introspection turn into a set of "what ifs" -- just learn from it and move on.

Don't dwell on your mistakes -- but learn from them.

When you get right down to it, the only rope whose end you should ever worry about is a rope with a noose. You can survive any predicament that comes your way -- and with a bit of work, some luck, and some introspection, turn it to your long-term advantage.

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