

# It's Okay to Fall or Fail

Category: Courage

written by Esther Pottoore | March 4, 2022

Sara looked me up and down when I walked into the exam room. Her diabetes and hypertension were uncontrolled, and her PCP had asked me to counsel her.

I introduced myself as an RN and asked Sara to tell me about herself. She launched into her medical history, but I stopped her. "Tell me about Sara," I said, "and what she likes."

She looked startled. "Well, I'm a proud grandmother of a four-year-old," she said. "Her name is Amy."

"What's your dream in five years?" I asked her.

"I want to buy a house," she said. "A small one, but mine!"

"Would you like a backyard for Amy to hang out in?"

"Definitely!"

"As you get older, would you rather spend time with her or with me and your PCP?"

"Oh, with Amy, of course—though you're all so nice here!"

"Well," I said, "then let's see what we can do to improve your health so you're not in and out of the clinic or the hospital."

I went over her lab results, warning signs she should watch for, and diet recommendations.

"I know what my problem is," she offered.

"You do? Tell me!"

"Well, I love French fries, fried chicken, and ice cream—and, oh, fruit, too!"

"A lady of good tastes, I see!" I teased gently. "Thank you for being honest, Sara," I added. "You know, if your dream is to own a house and spend time with Amy, you have to be the boss of your health. Do you think you could use an air fryer for your French fries, bake your chicken crispy, and have frozen fruit bars and just an occasional ice cream?"

"That sounds like a plan!" she replied.

"Increase your water intake," I added, "pee a lot, and sleep or rest at least six hours a day. Make a point of seeing Amy at least once a week. And don't forget to check out houses!"

Sara looked happier than when I had walked in.

“Sara,” I said, “it took courage to be honest, and I appreciate that. I have days when I comfort-eat, too, but then I dust myself off and start over. It’s okay to fall or fail—that’s called being human. The important thing is to keep going.”

I saw her monthly, and her numbers kept improving. She said she was not so hard on herself and even began to lose weight. Her PCP was amazed and asked, “How did you do it?”

“I told her it was okay to fall or fail,” I replied, “but to have courage and start over again. I also reminded her that if she’s saving up for her dream house, she can’t afford to get sick!”

The PCP shook his head and laughed.

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