



KARYN SHANKS MD

Heart, Hope, Healing

Permission to Fail

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | JUNE 30, 2020



Dear One,

Why is failure so dang hard?

Sure, there are setbacks and disappointments that lead us to change our plans, but what about those colossal failures that call our worth and belonging and faith into question?

Like losing a job. Blurting out the wrong thing and hurting a loved one's feelings. Trusting someone who lets us down.

Or worse—the failures we have no control over and have far worse consequences. Like failing to be good enough for our families, friends, tribes. Or failing to be the answer to their pain.

Don't they rock our worlds?

In truth, it's not the failures, themselves, that challenge us so. Not really. It's the traumatized stories we tell about them. *I let myself down. I let all them down. I'm not good enough. I'm not as good as they are. I can't do this. I am a failure.*

Right?

Let's nip this in the bud right now. No longer will we carry the toxic shame of our failures. Let's give ourselves permission to fail. Insert your name at the beginning, then let the words in this permission slip wash over you. Sink into them. *Feel* them. Or, if you feel inspired, write your own nuanced permission slip!

Dear [your name],

Listen up, you. You're as awesome as they come. I want you to know this right now—and don't talk back—yes, you are awesome. You try hard. And do your best. And, of course you freaking fail! You know why? Because it's actually not failure! It's you just being your whole, true, authentic self and bumping up against the resistance of someone else and their expectations.

Or it's you out there trying hard and doing your best and Life School is showing you how to stay on Your True Path. This is the golden path that only you can create and walk. It's like no one else's path. And there's only one way to find it. To try hard and do your best. To be your true self. And in doing so, fall down, encounter obstacles, make choices that don't quite work the way you want them to, and meet people who don't like you. It's hard.

I give you my full permission right now—and you must hear this and take it in and let it permeate your entire being—to be your whole true self, to try hard and do your best, to make all those beautiful mistakes that aren't really mistakes but just road signs showing you Your True Path. Relish them. Invite them. Celebrate them. They are you. And they will always be your wisest teachers. I love you, Me.

Ahhh ... walking Your True Path feels amazing.

Have a beautiful week.

Karyn

Resources

Karyn Shanks MD. [How to Empower Your Healing Story \(Rewrite Your Failure Stories\)](#). 2020.

Karyn Shanks MD. [Heal: A Nine-Stage Roadmap to Recover Energy, Reverse Chronic Illness, and Claim the Potential of a Vibrant New You](#). Heal Literary Press, 2019.

Karyn Shanks MD. [I'm Not Feeling Better: Is it Failure? Or is There More to Do?](#) 2019.

Pema Chödrön. [Fail, Fail Again, Fail Better: Wise Advice for Leaning into the Unknown](#). 2015.

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Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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