

Try the Impossible

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Impossible, or improbable?

"There is nothing impossible to the man who will try." - Alexander the Great

To "try" means to "attempt". Inherent in the word "try" -- it means:

You can try something, but that doesn't necessarily mean you will succeed.

Therefore, in 'trying', there is some inherent risk involved -- a risk of failure.

However for almost every action we attempt in life, there is always a risk of some sort of "failure" or negative feedback.

For example, when you shoot a basketball and attempt to sink it into the hoop, there's a (high) chance you're going to miss. Even the best NBA players don't sink in all their shots. But of course from a physics perspective, you literally cannot get a ball to go through a hoop without putting in the *action* of shooting the ball.

The same thing in life -- there is no way you can learn anything, do anything, or *be* anything without trying.

"There is nothing impossible to the man who will try."

Let us take it back to Alexander the Great's saying: "There is nothing impossible to the man who will try." What does this truly mean?

Well, let us dissect the word 'impossible'.

The problem is that most of us modern people when we say "impossible", what we *really* mean is 'improbable'.

For example, of course it is physically *possible* to become a billionaire, but in most cases, it is generally *improbable* (not probable) that you will become a billionaire. Also on a side note, the word 'probable' means "to test//to demonstrate". So perhaps the "probability" of something happening means:

"Can you demonstrate that you can actually achieve this in reality?"

Improbable vs Possible

Now it is essential for us to distinguish between 'improbable' and 'possible'. Once again to state more clearly:

1. **Improbable:** How *likely* is it for you to achieve your dream (what is your percentage chance of success)
2. **Possible:** According to the law of physics (first principles thinking via Aristotle), is this goal you desire to achieve *possible* according to the law of physics and to reality?

Now almost anything is *possible* in real life. Consider if we just think of the law of physics, the entire earth is our open-ended sandbox/playground. For example some *possible* (but not always probable) things:

1. It is *possible* to build a trillion-dollar company (see Apple)
2. It is *possible* to get 1+ million followers (see any modern celebrity/famous person)
3. It is *possible* to invent epic new shit (consider Elon Musk with Tesla, SpaceX, AND salacity).

So friend, we should remove the word 'impossible' from our dictionary; perhaps we should replace the word 'impossible' with "improbable" or "difficult".

Why do we say, "This is impossible"

In modern society, you often hear people say,

"This is impossible!"

But I am always curious to think:

*"Do they **really** think it is impossible? Or are they just saying this out of frustration, lack of self-belief, or lack of willpower?"*

Difficult to say, but this is my theory:

In modern society, many individuals have had this epic "will to power" attitude beaten out of them at an early age.

For example, if you're an idealist in college, many adults will actually *DISCOURAGE* you (strip you of your courage) from attempting or doing idealistic things. They tell you that your dreams aren't "practical" and that you should "get a real job" (ie. become an office-worker-slave).

In many countries in the world (especially Asia), you're *DISCOURAGED* from trying risky things-- you're told to take the 'safe option' in life (doctor, lawyer, accountant, engineer), to "succeed" in life. Remember the Chinese-Confucian saying, "The nail that sticks out the most must be hammered in the hardest."

Also, if you want to attempt the impossible, you *need* to be perceived as "crazy" by others. Because most human beings (unfortunately through socialization) have become obedient and fearful herd-animals (sheeple;sheep-people). When they see you attempting great and difficult things, often they're just scared *for* you. A lot of people who hold you back are generally people who care and love for you-- they just don't want to see you hurt or fail (soccer mom mentality).

But the truth is, in order to grow, we *NEED* to fail! To grow stronger, we *NEED* scars! Could you become a world-class boxer without getting knocked unconscious (many) times? Can you (as a scientist) discover a new drug or cure without

(billions) of failed attempts? Can you make a good photograph without taking millions of bad photos? I think not.

Difficult is fun

The funny thing is that I think you can judge a lot of people's appetite for risk when it comes to video games.

For example, there are lots of individuals who like to play puzzle games, solo games, etc on the "easy" difficulty. Or they don't like to play online games where they fight with others, because they are afraid of getting killed or losing. In life, some people play to win, and others play to avoid losing.

I've always prided myself on challenging myself and "leveling up" and playing every video game I played as a child in the 'difficult' or 'extreme' mode. Why? Honestly-- it was just more fun! The chance of dying, the chance of failing is what made me focus and concentrate more (which is generally more fun).

To go on a tangent, this is why I like powerlifting with very very heavy weights. When I am squatting a "one rep max" weight of something 1.5-2x my bodyweight, and I squat all the way to the ground (the 'ass to grass' technique), the possibility that I cannot get the weight up is a real fear. Thus, I don't fuck around when I am in the gym -- I concentrate, cut out all distractions, and give it my 100% focused energy. I never do this level of focus if I'm just lifting light weights or when doing yoga -- only when there is a chance of some possible downside (failure to lift the weight, or even potentiality of me injuring myself when lifting heavy weights).

Once again, the challenge and the difficulty is what makes things fun-- because it forces you to concentrate, and to use all of your strength!

The upside of downside

To *try* something means that you are risking *something*. Generally, you are risking the chance of failure. Thus whenever you *try* something or attempt something, there is always a chance of downside (failure).

However, after reading much of Nassim Taleb and contemplating these thoughts on my own, I've realized:

There can be no upside to life without downside.

In other words,

*We **NEED** downside in life and failures in life, in order to savor the sweet taste of success!*

For example in competitions, there can be no winners without losers.

In art, you cannot have light tones without dark tones.

In human biology, you cannot give birth to children without having both the male and female.

In life, you cannot have success without failure.

This is a 'dualistic' way of thinking in life. A lot of Zen/Taoist philosophers have come up with this line of thinking, as well as the Pre-Socratic philosophers (the philosophers who lived and philosophized *BEFORE* Socrates was born, such as Empedocles, Heraclitus, etc).

I like dualism as a philosophy because it is simple and elegant in the concept, yet deep and profound on the other hand. For example consider these concepts:

- Without death, there is no life.
- Gathering together vs scattering apart.
- There is no beginning or end in a circle.

Or some other examples:

- "I never fall apart, because I never come together." - Andy Warhol

- "You cannot have one without the other."
 - "No pain, no gain."
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Conclusion

To wrap up this essay, I want you to consider:

1. What do you desire to *achieve* in life?
2. *Why* do you want to achieve that in life?
3. *How* can you achieve that in life?
4. Is it physically possible to achieve that in life (from a physics perspective)? If so, is it *probable* that you can achieve that in life?
5. What are the difficulties and challenges holding you back from achieving that in life?
6. How bad do you want to achieve that in life?
7. What are the risks/potential downsides you're willing to take to achieve that?

If you have taken yourself through this line of thinking, and still have brazen courage in your soul; I say my friend:

Try!

ERIC