



A Resilient Heart Journal

7-Steps to Overcoming a Setback

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[On the climb of your life, you deserve an experienced guide.](#)

Dear Reader,

Setbacks come in all forms. A minor disappointment can be a setback but so can a major upheaval. The following 7 Steps to Overcoming a Setback can be accomplished over seven hours, seven days, or may require seven months depending on what you've faced.

Remember this—all God's people face setbacks, obstacles, challenges, and opposition in pursuit of their God-given purpose. Sometimes it's warfare. Other times it's a test, correction, discipline, training, or a situation brought about to bring God greater glory. Whatever it is, it's common and can be overcome. You are not alone.

I've had a lifetime of challenges and setbacks. God has taught me the power of perseverance. The lessons didn't arrive by mail, but by mayhem. Seven of my strategies are here for you.

If you feel you need more personalized support, email me at lorisroel@gmail.com and ask about coaching. [On the climb of your life, you deserve an experienced guide.](#) Let me be here for you. You're the hero of your own story but there are parts of the trail it's best not to climb alone.

I'm praying for all who download this. God will fulfill His purpose for you. Setbacks can make you doubt that, but the truth stands.

Remember these words from Hebrews 10:35-39 ESV: "Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, 'Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls."

Mercy and grace,

Lori Roeleveld

STEP 1—REMEMBER YOUR WHO

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:15-17 ESV).

Knowing your why is vital but more vital is remembering your who. When we face a setback, disappointment, or loss in pursuit of our God-given purpose, we often miss the subtle attack on identity. First, we may be tempted to question who God is, even if He exists at all. Second, we wonder if we have what it takes—if we *are* what it takes. We may wonder if we’re invisible. This may be a time of testing to strengthen your understanding of God and yourself for bigger things to come or an attack meant to sideline and drain you of energy. Put up a fight. List below what you know about God’s character and who He is in your life. List, also, who you are in Christ. Don’t let these circumstance create identity amnesia. Bring it all to mind using God’s Word.

Father God, You are good, holy, just, loving, full of compassion and mercy. You are my Father, the One who sent Jesus to secure my salvation. You are worthy of my trust, and I know you see me. I am yours. I belong to you. These circumstances do not define me, you do. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

STEP 2—REMEMBER YOUR WHY

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, ‘Everyone is looking for you.’ And he said to them, ‘Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.’” (Mark 1:35-38 ESV).

The fog of this world gets so thick sometimes we’re tempted to forget why we do what we do. Jesus drew away early, while it was still dark, to be alone with His Father, and remember why He came. Spend time now remembering your vision, your calling, your God-given purpose. Everyone faces setbacks but that doesn’t change the goal. Why did you set out toward this vision? Go back to where you heard God’s voice and hear it again now. If you’ve never created a mission statement summarizing your purpose, write one here today. Remember your why.

Father God, You are my why. You are the reason I am on this path. It’s not easy. The way is sometimes shrouded in darkness or obscured from view. There are obstacles and challenges, but You are with me. I pursue this goal in Jesus’ name and trust that He is with me at every turn, even the wrong ones. Blessed be Your name, Amen.

STEP 3—HONOR YOUR LOSS

“Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”
 (Lamentations 3:19-23 ESV).

Jesus came to give us life to the full—abundant life. Setbacks, losses, and failure are part of life. Ignoring the pain of a loss or shoving a setback down in our spirits too quickly can come back to bite us later. God invented lament as a means of letting our souls cry out with release. We can learn to bring Him every pain. He transforms it as we bring it, not as we bury it. Allow time to grieve and take stock of your loss (the amount of time in measure to the size of the setback). List what you’ve lost and let God hear your lament. He is with you in all things.

Father God, this world is not as I want it to be, and neither am I. I fail the world and the world fails me. Sometimes, the enemy takes aim, and it hits the mark, but I know You are the final word on my life, not this setback, not this loss. I am sad, frustrated, and disappointed but I am not without hope because of You. Great is your faithfulness, O Lord. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

STEP 4—REJECT EVERY LIE

“Be sober-minded; be watchful.

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9 ESV).

Setbacks, losses, and failures are breeding grounds for deception. We have an enemy. Besides our own sinfulness and the bent of our personalities, we face opposition from Satan who is a destroyer and deceiver. Read 1 Peter 5:6-11 and James 4:1-10. Surrender to God. Resist the evil one. Draw near to God and trust Him to draw near to you. Take every thought captive and examine it for truth. Renounce every lie and respond with the truth of God’s Word. List any thoughts you identify as deceptive and write a truth-honoring response beside it. Put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) against all further attacks.

Jesus, I draw near to You. You are the One who determines my identity, my future, my life. Defend me against all spiritual attacks and help me see any deceptive thoughts I’ve allowed into my thinking. Fill my mind with light and let me have Your mind in all things. I consecrate to You my thoughts, my interpretation of events, and my inner being. I invite you into my inner being as You desire truth there. Let Your truth live in me, in Your name, Amen.

STEP 5—TAKE STOCK

*“I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned.”
(Nehemiah 2:13-15 ESV).*

Invite God in to assess the damage of this setback with you. Hopefully, it’s small but perhaps, it appears catastrophic. Don’t avoid looking at it. Face it and take its measure. Nehemiah went out alone in the night (with God) and assessed the damage to the wall of Jerusalem. As he reviewed it, God helped him devise a plan to rebuild. You can do the same. Consider what next steps need to take place and create a plan to move forward.

Father God, You are the God who restores the years the locusts have eaten. You helped your people rebuild Jerusalem. You restore hearts, minds, and lives. These circumstances are not too great for You. Help me assess them and provide wisdom to create a plan to overcome. May it be for Your glory, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

STEP 6—RISE, RECOMMIT, RECONSECRATE.

“Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.” (Micah 7:8 ESV).

Do this alone or invite others in, others who believe in what you’re about and who share the vision for your God-given purpose. We are forgiven in Christ through His death on the cross, but we also have the power that was at work in His resurrection at work in us (2 Corinthians 13:4). Rise up in your spirit with the knowledge of His resurrection power. Recommit yourself to the work. Reconsecrate your work, your heart, your mind, your soul, your spirit, and your strength to Him. Remember that all of God’s people attempting great undertakings have faced opposition, failures, challenges, and setbacks. You’re not alone. The work is hard, but He is worth it.

Father God, thank You for sending Jesus to die for me and thank You for raising Him from the dead. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit now and let me experience that resurrection power at work in this situation. I consecrate myself to You and place myself under Your authority, Your protection, and Your empowerment. I consecrate the work to You anew. Let me abide in You. I can do nothing apart from You but with You, nothing is impossible. “The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands” (Psalm 138:8). I move forward in the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

