

DOWN BUT NOT OUT

by Stacy Feiner, PsyD
Case Study



Nothing could have prepared him for his fall from grace. One minute, a world-class athlete—performing in front of the world with his whole life ahead of him. The next, alone in the despair due to an irreversible injury. Suddenly his career as a formidable professional athlete was over—a loss that shattered his identity.

From that day forward, his thoughts tormented him into a pattern of addiction and shame. Despite glimpses of a better future and attempts to climb out of the sadness, he would slide back into the cycle of depression, addiction, and shame.

He hit rock bottom on the day he broke his commitment to a friend. Angry at himself for letting self-loathing take precedence over his promise, he realized he was not the man he wanted to be. Jolted by this awareness, he asked me for help. Together we started on his path to recovery.

His emotions were so tangled it was hard to stabilize his mind. He had been filtering every aspect of his life through a lens of defeat, effectively building a wall of distortions around him that was almost impenetrable.”

Until one day, we found a subtle crack—just enough to let the light of possibility seep in. As we reflected during a coaching session, I wondered, “What if all the things you hate about yourself are consequences of your injury?” I gently reminded him that his injury was not his fault and that others had suffered from similar circumstances.

As he considered this, I continued. “What if you’re suffering,

not from the moral decay of your person, but from symptoms caused by your injury?”

Again as he digested, I pushed, “What if you believed misgivings about yourself in an attempt to practice self-acceptance—a sign you’re trying to heal?”

His eyes widened.

As his armor came down, his sense of identity began to re-emerge. He stopped seeing himself as a failure and saw the elite athlete that still existed within him. He remembered his love of discipline, and we strengthened his fortitude, confidence, and the commitment to outperform every day.

He was regaining his footing. And sure enough, he recognized himself. Ultimately, he applied his elite mindset and emotional maturity to start his own company.

Our work was based on trust, accountability, and a willingness to dig through the rubble, piece by piece, to get to the truth. His truth.

On the surface, his injury looked like an insurmountable setback. Now it’s an incredible comeback story. One he could never have imagined.

Take away: When you’re ready to achieve higher levels of awareness to improve everything and reach new levels of success—I am here for you! My process interrupts unconscious patterns and delivers real health into how you live your life and make decisions.