

# How to catch a falling would be star

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by Nicholas de Castella

## Short Version: How to catch a falling would be star

Even though my best marathon was the tenth fastest by any Australian, at the time I felt disappointed as I had higher expectations.

I wonder if you have had similar experiences of having had some kind of dream that was never fulfilled.

The question is 'how do we reinvent ourselves?'

We have to grieve the loss of the dream.

I am loved as I am - my boys just love me for who I am not what I do.

Looking inside for answers -I can feel that I am a peaceful, whole and loving being.

For me it is also about values.

There are gems in the ordinary

I think nobody wants to be ordinary, but trying to be special is fraught with misery and unhappiness.

Trying to be special is subtly saying that I am less than OK the way I am

As long as we believe that 'I am not good enough', we shall appear that way.

I am as good as I get.

We cease trying to make ourselves the best ever and instead we start working on making the best of how we are in this moment.

I am not arguing for mediocrity

The normal and ordinary are rich with wonder and blessings

## Full article:

### **How to catch a falling would be star**

Last Thursday I was listening to Venero Armanno, author of 'The Dirty Beat', being interviewed on radio. He was talking about how he had been a rock singer in a band in his twenties and nearly made it to success. But there came a day when he had to face it, he was never going to be a rock star. He went on to work as a salesman for a computer company and try to come to terms with his unrealised dreams and explore how to reinvent himself.

I related to his story because that is more or less what I experienced in my athletic career. I put everything into being a world class athlete. Though I represented Australia in 4 world cross country events I never reached my ambitions of making it to the Olympics or Commonwealth Games. Even though my best marathon was the tenth fastest by any Australian, at the time I felt disappointed as I had higher expectations.

Though many of my peers think I did very well, I still feel some shame, slightly embarrassed that I put so much into it but did not achieve my ambitions.

### Unfulfilled dreams

I wonder if you have had similar experiences of having had some kind of dream that was never fulfilled. Maybe you have had a dream project that failed, a career prospect that never blossomed, a loving relationship that didn't go anywhere, a farm that was foreclosed on, a child that died, a marriage that ended, a family that broke down...

Venero was saying that his book was about how to find meaning in his life after his unfulfilled rock dreams ended.

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Whilst I am sure most top athletes would have some kind of a dream left unfulfilled (for example my brother Rob never got an Olympic gold medal) I think there are deeper issues present here.

I think that much of the time I mistakenly believed that I would 'be a somebody' if I achieved a certain status. If I performed I was somehow more worthwhile. This was heightened at the Australian Institute of Sport where there was a tendency to value people on how they were performing. Most people wanted to associate with the people who were running well.

Luckily I did have a few mates in Canberra who were as much focused on having a good time as they were on performing at an elite level.

The question is 'how do I reinvent myself?'

This is a work in progress. Here are some of the answers I have come up with so far. Let me know if you also have some ideas:

We have to grieve the loss of the dream

There is no other way through this than to feel and acknowledge the loss of the hopes and dreams. Change happens when we feel what is. In a strange way I can see that I have not fully grieved my past (even though it was nearly 20 years ago) and have consequently been still attached to it. I can now see that the feelings of not being totally successful have been present in what I have been doing in my life.

This whole topic has only come to my awareness clearly this week and I am kind of hoping that in reflecting, writing and feeling about it I shall move forward towards coming fully to terms with this part of my past.

I am loved unconditionally as I am

My two boys Charles (6) and Alexander (4) are my greatest teachers. They help me to realign my values by showing me what is real: I can come home from working in the office wondering where the day went and if I achieved very much of significance, feeling a little low, open the door and be rushed almost off my feet with enthusiastic shouts of "mum dad's home!". The boys just love me and think I am fabulous because I am their dad! They just love me for who I am not what I do.

These days I practice looking inside for answers

I also work at establishing my sense of who I am based upon what is within rather than outside me. When I live in the present moment and practice connecting to my heart I can feel that I am a peaceful, whole and loving being. I know this is more real than any 'stories' about being a success or failure I may run in my head.

For me it is also about values.

It comes down to where my values are. In the old days my values were in achieving, in getting recognition and acknowledgement.

Today whether I feel good about myself is about what do I value about who I am and am I living up to those values. For example some of my values for myself are that I am a kind, gentle, compassionate, honest, caring, sincere, forgiving, helpful and caring man. When I live according to these values I feel good about myself. When I am falling short I need to draw more on the gentleness and compassion for myself.

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### There are gems in the ordinary

I fell into a very seductive trap of wanting to be special - not ordinary. I assumed that if I 'made it' that some how I would be happy and contented. The evidence of super stars behaviour is contrary to this, but I was not that logical!

I think nobody wants to be ordinary, but trying to be special is fraught with misery and unhappiness.

### Trying to be special is subtly saying that I am less than OK the way I am

There is a subtle invalidation of what 'is' when we constantly seek the special. We are often waiting for that magic moment, that big bang, that high that is going to change us forever. Peak experiences are not sustainable and not where happiness lies.

### As long as we believe that 'I am not good enough', we shall appear that way.

In relentlessly pursuing peak experiences and trying to live up to some fantasy ideal of 'how I should be' we tend to discredit how we are in this moment because we are not living up to our fantasy expectations. The critical mind can always find fault if it looks.

### I am is as good as I get

If we start from a different presumption we can have quite a different experience. If we assume that 'this is it', that 'this moment is as good as it gets' and 'I am who I am', then we start viewing what is happening on an entirely different basis. We start actively looking for what is good and right about ourselves. We accept where we are right now. We see problems as challenges for us to grow. We see what is perfect about the moment and the many things that are always present to be thankful for.

We cease trying to make ourselves the best ever and instead we start working on making the best of how we are in this moment.

### I am not arguing for mediocrity

That's not mediocrity - its the acceptance of the uniqueness present in the ordinary. The fact is that when we make this shift in our perspective we realise just how wonderful and excellent life really is.

### The normal and ordinary are rich with wonder

When we become intimate with the present, ordinary moment it reveals a rich tapestry of life unfolding in quite a wonderful way. The smallest things start having tremendous significance and we find beauty in things we never could have thought were beautiful. And it offers us a sustainable and achievable access to happiness and contentment.

From this perspective it is easy to see that we do indeed have a precious human life and are blessed to take each breath and share each moment here on earth.

I hope my suffering has been of use to you.

I wish you a perfectly, happy ordinary day.

Let me know what you think. Liked the article? Questions? Drop me a line.

I'd love to hear from you.

Nicholas, info@eq.net.au

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