

**Body for Life
Dealing with Adversity
(excerpts from the book)**

Since dealing with adversity is such a big part of the challenge facing COTS clients and staff, here is material from Body for Life on this subject. To put this in context, among the challenges faced by the tens of thousands of participants in this program are HIV/AIDS, broken bones, and profound physical disability. *I've italicized material that I think you'll find especially applicable to our work at COTS.*

Life, the ultimate challenge, is not a race to the finish but rather a process of continual growth.

a. Expect adversity and be prepared to transform obstacles into energy

Adversity hits all of us, and not just "once in a blue moon." No one is exempt. When trouble, in whatever form, strikes, it can bring your progress to a screeching halt. It can destroy your momentum, cripple your self-confidence, and send you into a tailspin--a situation where one thing after another, after another just doesn't go your way.

What you can do is expect adversity as an inevitable part of life. In fact, you must expect trouble in order to properly deal with it. Remember, it's not a matter of if it comes your way; it's a matter of when and how severely it strikes your life.

When this happens, ask **WHAT CAN I DO TO TURN THIS NEGATIVE INTO A POSITIVE? HOW CAN I MAKE THIS WORK FOR ME RATHER THAN AGAINST ME?**

This approach provides inner strength. It helps you realize that misfortune is a bridge, not a barricade, to greater achievements. When adversity strikes, don't let it stop you. Promise yourself in advance you will transform that negative into a positive. That's not just the right way to handle it, it's the only way.

b. Honor self-promises by finishing what you start

When you begin this 12 week program, you must promise yourself that you will finish what you start, **NO MATTER WHAT.**

The very essence of confidence is self-trust. Would you trust anyone who repeatedly lied to you? Someone who broke the rules of the game, again and again? Of course you wouldn't. So, if you've developed a pattern, a habit, of not honoring self-promises, this is a great time to make a change. *If you can't honor, trust, depend on your own word, well...that may be the root of a lot of the challenges in your life--a lot more than you realize.*

The thing about lying to ourselves is that we never, ever get away with it. On the surface, we may fool our minds into ignoring or not admitting what we're doing. But deep down, in the place where all truth resides for each of us, in the place where we know and see ourselves as we really are—it is in that place that we are causing pain and damage every time we're not totally honest with ourselves.

Contrary to what many people think, it's a lot easier to keep the promises we make to ourselves than it is to break them. Keeping those promises unleashes enormous energy and potential.

c. Harness the power of positive pressure by embracing challenges

Many people start strong but then fade.

Most people in America have been conditioned to believe they should coast through life as much as possible, and gravitate toward circumstances where no one is demanding anything of them. This is not good. Deep down inside, you need pressure to feel excited and passionate about life.

Real life examples of people performing heroically under pressure can be found everywhere -- for instance, the fireman who rescues a child from a burning building.

The fact is that we all are capable of so much more than we might believe we are, but our ultimate potential is smothered by what society teaches us. It's through pressure or stress that we grow.

Begin with challenging your muscles. Then invite other challenges back into your life. Rather than run from pressure situations, or pretend they don't exist, face them. Seek them out.

You can harness the power of positive pressure to motivate yourself by setting deadlines, making commitments for which you pay in advance, by telling others about the deadlines you've set for your goals. Entering a competition is another way.

d. Focus on progress, not perfection, in order to build confidence

Protect your confidence. One way to do this is by forgetting about perfection -- which doesn't in fact exist! Loss of confidence can undermine morale and momentum. A good way to keep momentum is to measure progress often.