

# Life Isn't Always Perfect

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I am inspired by people who start from a place of acceptance to move beyond their difficult circumstances to great accomplishment. One such example is the couple Amanda Sullivan and Todd Love. Amanda was in a pedestrian car accident that, for a time, confined her to a wheelchair. Now she is a marathoner and a Spartan Race ambassador. It wasn't just her body that willed her to endure daily grueling training to get where she is today. It was her mind. As she said in a Spartan post, "I realized that my body was broken, but my soul was intact." Her partner, Marine Corporal Todd Love, is a triple amputee and an inspiring guy who jumps out of planes, does Spartan Races, skydives and apparently also wrestles alligators. [Here is a story about Todd Love shared by Huffington Post.](#)

Life isn't always perfect. We can live as abundantly as we are able, but there may be short-term and long-term limitations. However, these limitations don't need to bring us to a dead stop when working on fitness, mindfulness and healthy eating goals. We can work at finding acceptance in our current situation and chip away at our goals from there. Mindful acceptance does not mean settling into current conditions in a complacent way. It means accepting where we are, and strategizing about how to move forward. Embrace the idea of using acceptance as an opportunity to establish future goals.

Finding acceptance is crucial for meeting life's changes and challenges. We seek a state of acceptance when grieving a loss, when in physical pain and when life is plain topsy-turvy. We

can start by focusing on something incredibly positive: our minds are powerful and we can train our brains for acceptance. Believing in the power of the brain will allow that power to be unleashed.

Your brain can take full charge of your body in times of stress and challenge. I've certainly learned this lesson from running marathons and ultra-marathons. I know that certain challenges are likely for me in a long-distance road race, such as traveling pains and feet of lead. In my first few races, I was surprised and disappointed by these "uncontrollable" changes in my body. Then, I learned to accept these temporary effects of long-distance running.

Now I can mentally prepare in advance and ask my brain to remember that this is "normal" and I'm certainly not the only runner out there feeling this way. I know that with improved physical strength, aches and pains will become less frequent, but when I do experience them, I am better prepared.

Then there is the story of former military paratrooper, Arthur Boorman. His doctors said he would never walk unassisted again as a result of too many jumps and landings, and at first he accepted this as fact. With time, he had a change of heart and mind and tracked down DDP Yoga, a fitness program created by ex-pro wrestler Diamond Dallas Page. When he initially reached out to DDP, he still didn't fully believe he could create change, but with the motivation of his instructor he was able to envision a different life. Through many falls in practice, he never lost his dedication. He lost 140 pounds and now is able to walk and run without crutches. [Here is the YouTube inspirational video about this transformation.](#)

The mind/body connection is important for anyone who exercises. In fact, The New York Times recently posted about a study showing that being mindful when exercising can improve your positive associations about exercise. [Read all about it here.](#)

Understanding and accepting our emotions is especially helpful for those of us experiencing a loss, particularly a loss of a close relationship. Accepting the fact that loss can bring a wide variety of emotions such as anger, despair, depression, sadness, emptiness and others, will allow you to become more kind to yourself and others. Recognizing these states as normal allows you to see that you will eventually pass through them, and transition into a happier you in the future. For anyone experiencing a personal crisis or stressful times, I recommend [Pema Chodron's book, "When Things Fall Apart."](#) This meaningful and practical book is truly helpful in coming to a place of acceptance during challenging times, and provides paths for improving on such situations.

For minor and temporary challenges, look to basic tools to mitigate your stress. Incredibly, there are many practices that take mere moments or minutes to reduce your stress. Simply breathing in and out slowly will help you to become calmer and more accepting of your current stressors. This allows you to use your brain to find solutions to your stressors. In most situations, simple self-hypnotherapy will help calm you quickly. [Check out Healthline's recommendations for the top 18 anti-stress and anti-anxiety apps on the market.](#) A regular meditation practice is the best way to be able to consistently connect your mind to your heart and body to decrease your levels of stress and anxiety.

Being aware of the present moment and accepting what is present are key to acceptance of the self.

When we scratch the wound and give in to our addictions we do not allow the wound to heal. But when we instead experience the raw quality of the itch or pain of the wound and do not scratch it, we actually allow the wound to heal.

*Pema Chodron*