



“The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way.”

- Marcus Aurelius

how about this - a challenge is not an opportunity in disguise. a challenge is simply the vehicle for progress. the road and the map. the means. nothing more. nothing less.

we make our obstacles profoundly personal, and through that distort our perception and waste precious energy. we stress and we panic and weaken our chances of success. we set ourselves up for failure as a matter of habit.

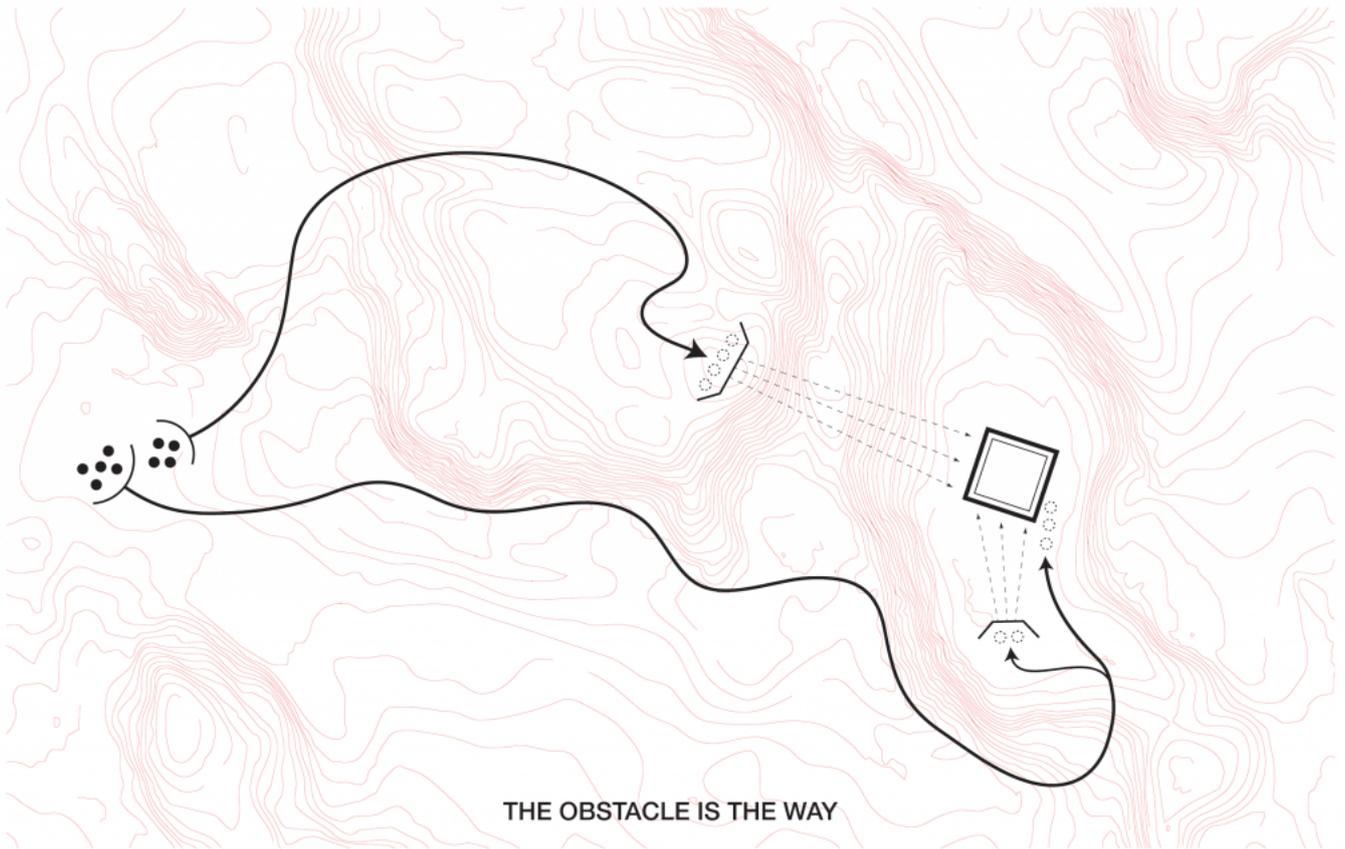
change that habit.

arguably, the only thing we have true control of is our thoughts. we must re-frame our perceptions. this is difficult. this will take training. this will be worth it. “this sucks” is actually two thoughts - an

observation and a judgement - "this" - whatever it is - is happening, and on top of that: i don't like it. the judgement is automatic and, while i will concede that it is relevant to a point, it does not change the facts of **what** is happening. the obstacle is not altered by our feelings. the obstacle when properly observed is simply a list of interconnected tasks that must be achieved. cleverness, talent, and style may allow an individual to skip certain steps, or take them in a different order, but once competencies are assessed a plan must be enacted. our feelings do not change the task. at a certain point no question or plea will change what must be done and will only serve to sap time and energy that could be better spent on engaging the problem. this is the moment to re-frame - to ask "would the answer to this question change the problem?" if the task is unchangeable than chances are your questioning is simply feeding your own panic and wasting time. the best tacticians pause long enough to not react emotionally, but do not wait so long as to miss opportunities. and opportunities are the point. we are defined by our struggles. created by them. needs can only be assessed in relation to a goal. the obstacle - when viewed correctly - will tell you precisely what it needs you to be.

this is where the training comes in. to teach ourselves to minimize the panicked, emotional reaction - to feel it and dismiss it as soon as it ceases to be useful. we train ourselves to absorb the cold facts of the situation, to honestly assess our abilities and to execute with precision and audacity that which must be done. to constantly face relatively simple problems, to hone our skills in viewing the source of our immediate discomfort as containing the means to overcome it. to see a goal, and work towards it - unapologetically. if something is actually "in the way" then it must be dealt with. it is important to be clear with the final objective and the frame in which we can act - with the "length of our leash" so to speak, and the consequences for indiscretion - and then to let everything that does not matter truly slide. accidents and mistakes will happen. failures will happen. without the emotional content all that is happening is a re-framing of the problem. a better view of the map, new skills, and a new timeline - the obstacle stays the same. it is why we look at the gym as a mental engagement with physical side effects. we orchestrate stressors to illicit specific changes. obstacles within obstacles - each given their rightful attention at the right time. our physical capabilities are tools in the box - as we stretch and stress our ability to flex and endure, our bodies change to reflect - expanding our toolkit and allowing us to move over and through and on to new obstacles. for us the goal is change. it is improvement. refinement. we have become so comfortable in our daily lives that we are rotting. so we search - we approach obstacles, we pick a fight. we look to things that are bigger and harder and crash upon them in order to become harder ourselves. we seek the stress - find pleasure in the discomfort and inconvenience knowing that it is our choice. our game. knowing that this temporary enemy is our greatest teacher. our truest friend. we feel this way because it is the most useful way to feel. if we cannot (or unwilling) to change the goal - if the obstacle is truly static and immovable - then it makes sense to enjoy the struggle. to approach the obstacle as a student, eager to learn.

in short - "the problem contains the fucking solution" we just need to get out of our own way long enough to see it. examine the obstacle - not to bemoan or inflate its perceived difficulty, but instead to accurately understand what must be done - and what you can get away with. what skills are needed, what constraints you are facing, and how you plan to spend your limited resources. often times the greatest difficulty lies not in the "doing" but in the assessment of what must be done. embrace the obstacle. the challenge. the "hard". we are adaptive creatures, molded by our environment - your challenges don't define you as much as they create you - or better yet you create yourself in the overcoming. change is not a prize, but a process - it does not lie at the top of a mountain but is, instead, a result of the climb.



*i am constantly amazed by the work of [joey roth](#) - his posters hang in the entrance of our gym, a beautiful and simple reminder of what we are trying to accomplish. and now we add another lesson to our wall... (this is apparently a limited run in colobration with [Ryan Holiday](#) in reference to [his book of the same name](#) - click the image to go to the official page)*