



Young Man with a Plan Newsletter

March 1, 2023

Young Man with a Plan helped me realize that for me to succeed I have to be willing to accept any and all challenges.

On Belonging and “Failing Forward”

My high school basketball coach said something I’ll never forget. During a drill, he told me, “It’s ok to lose the ball when doing dribbling drills. That means you’re pushing yourself and that’s the way to grow, to gain new skills.” While at the time I wanted to exercise the best ball control and display perfection to my teammates, his message made a real impact on my playing, my mindset, and the way I approach helping our young men progress. We encourage them to “fail forward.”

It may seem in conflict, but in YMWAP we both create a welcoming space of belonging AND we help kids help themselves out of their comfort zones to progress. Having someplace to belong is critical for the young men “in the middle” we serve. Research has shown that a sense of belonging positively impacts academic and health outcomes for young people. Young people who do not belong are at risk of choosing the wrong groups to belong to. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Creating a Sense of Belonging*, <https://www.aecf.org/blog/creating-a-sense-of-belonging>)

At the same time as we offer young men a safe accepting place to belong, we encourage them to take the kinds of risks that help them grow. We message and model “growth mindset” -- the concept that ability and talent can be learned, practiced, and built through persistent effort. We encourage young men to reach for the AP class, to take the new internship instead of the familiar summer job, to ask the girl to prom, to up their fitness plan, to apply to college. Our approach is something like the “roots and wings” that parents try to help their children possess – a solid feeling of security along with the confidence to try new things, even if you may fail.



Please reach out with any questions. Respectfully, Jaykyri

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