

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES FOR RECOVERING FROM SETBACKS**By Robert J. Tamasy**

Recently I observed the anniversary of my open-heart surgery nearly 20 years ago. Thankfully it went well, and I have not had any significant heart episodes in the years since. About a year following my surgery, as a way of 'giving back' for the excellent care I received, I started volunteering at the same hospital, visiting with patients who had just gone through similar open-heart procedures. I hoped that by sharing my own experiences, they would be encouraged in beginning their own recovery process.

I kept my visits brief, knowing the patients would be weak and tired after what they had gone through, but always left them with four helpful principles for experiencing a full recovery. These principles, however, are not just limited to overcoming serious health issues. They can apply to any crises or major problems we encounter, including in the workplace.

This includes the desire to faithfully represent Jesus Christ in an everyday environment that is often hostile to biblical truth. Here are those principles, strongly supported by assurances from the Bible:

Having Patience. Recovery from major surgery takes time, as does overcoming many of the challenges and setbacks we encounter in the marketplace. We typically want to get problems resolved quickly, putting them behind us. However, often the best resolutions come about more slowly than we would prefer. So we must practice patience. *"Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Maintaining a Positive Attitude. Serious health issues can be very discouraging when progress seems slow. The same is true in trying to rebound from setbacks and disappointments at work. We can become angry or develop a negative attitude about our circumstances, but choosing to maintain a positive attitude can reveal a better approach. Being positive also is beneficial for any healing process. *"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things"* (Philippians 4:8).

Developing Perseverance. Bouncing back from surgery often requires a rigorous rehabilitation process, one that must be pursued day after day for a considerable period of time. It is very similar when we encounter failures and hardships in the workplace. Recovering from them and getting back to where we would like to be also requires time and determination. *"...we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us"* (Romans 5:3-5).

Committing Concerns to Prayer. Whether dealing with serious health issues or formidable challenges at work, how do we cope with anxiety and fear about the uncertain, unseen future. 'Will I recover fully?' 'Will I ever overcome this major setback at work?' This is where we can appropriate and trust in the power of prayer. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians:4:6-7).

© 2026. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, coauthored with David A. Stoddard, and numerous other books and magazine articles. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Have you or someone close to you ever had to deal with a serious and ongoing health issue, one that required a considerable amount of time to overcome? How did you or that individual cope with that challenge?
2. Why is patience such a difficult virtue to cultivate, whether related to health concerns, complex issues in the workplace, or in our personal lives? How are patience and perseverance related?
3. Positive attitudes are not always easy to cultivate. Do you know someone who seems to excel at maintaining a negative attitude? What is the impact such negativity has on that person – and those with whom he or she interacts with on a consistent basis?
4. How easy – or difficult – is it for you to commit serious problems you are facing to God in prayer? Explain your answer.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; James 1:2-6, 3:17, 5:7-11

Challenge for This Week

What challenges or obstacles are you currently facing? Consider how these principles: Having patience; maintaining a positive attitude; developing perseverance; and committing your concerns to prayer could prove beneficial as you work through those issues.

If you are part of a CBMC team or small accountability group, it might be helpful to discuss these with them – “iron sharpening iron,” as Proverbs 27:17 describes it – to support one another and determine how to apply them most effectively. We do not need to work through our difficulties on our own.