Writing Assignment Unit 7 UNIV 1001

Failure is when you set out to do something but do not accomplish what you meant to. I am well acquainted with failure as I have set out to do things that most people would consider far to difficult to even consider. There is one event in particular that I attempted and failed at, a race called the 48-hour Jackalope Jam. My goal for the race was to get at least 200 miles, I only ended up getting 115. I had two major issues in the race one physical, and one mental. For the first dozen hours or so I ran non-stop, and at the tail end of those hours, I noticed an increasing pressure and pain in my knee, shortly after I went to sleep. I woke up at 2 AM to continue running and when I stood up an intense sharp pain shot up both my legs, I could not run. I went on to walk and limp through the rest of the race, except for sprinting the last ninety minutes. The pain in my knee could have been prevented by better preparing my body with stretching. During the second day, I had a lot of trouble being able to find the inner strength to run despite that pain, I feel both ashamed and regretful for being not doing so. Despite my failure, I learned a few key lessons about approaching ultra-marathons, logistical preparedness, physical preparedness, and mental strength.

On the flip side of failure is success, the thing we strive for. My most recent success is when I enrolled in a course on the educational platform Coursera. It was made by IBM, and it was an A.I. Engineer professional certification. In comparison completing this course was incomparable to my race previously detailed in terms of difficulty. It was much easier to complete since I could work on it at my discretion and it required no physical effort. Regardless of that, I feel that this is a landmark achievement and the first tangible step towards my career. The biggest value I got out of completing the course were the projects that gave me an increased familiarity and comfort with deep learning/machine learning (programming) libraries. I was able to significantly beef up my portfolio as a result and now have something to show off to potential employers. The first 3 courses were easily completed, the 2 following those and the final capstone project presented the most difficulty. At the end of the course, I had trouble balancing college coursework and the A.I. Engineer classes concurrently. I ended up having to do rush the final two courses and projects into a couple of days, and while it was a little stressful I feel much better now that it is done. I was able to complete it in this past week mainly because I decided that finishing this certification held priority over everything else, so I focused myself and completed it.

When you attempt to do something difficult without any goals you can sometimes lead yourself to failure or a success that is less than what you are capable of. In the case of the Jackalope Jam, I would have been much better off if I had done more research, had better time management, and was better prepared for the obstacles I encountered. I could have done better with my certificate if I had been more disciplined and had exercised better time management. Pretty much everything in my life is goal-driven, without my goals I would never come close to my potential. It might sound strange but I never had a single goal in my life until about 3 years ago, so I am a little late in my educational/life pursuits but I'm working hard to make up for it. Being a latecomer has its disadvantages but it has also been a massive driving force behind me for these past years. When I think about the most important aspects or characteristics of a goal I feel that the more personal your goal and the more it means to you, the greater likelihood that it will be completed. Whenever I set out to do something I always try to ensure whatever I am pursuing is important to me, if I don't then my work will suffer, because I won't be intrinsically motivated to finish. Another important aspect of a goal is to make sure that you don't take on more than you can handle. I have done this more times than I can count (please refer to the first paragraph for evidence). I have spent the past year trying to figure out the best way to learn and grow into my new career path with much difficulty and failure it is my hope that the worst is over and the best is yet to come. In the future of my education, I will continue to improve on my goal setting ability and attentiveness to the difficulty of the goal in comparison to my capabilities.

As a result of my previous actions and because of what I want out of my life, I have three goals to set for the future. My first goal and immediate concern is to get a job or an internship in the field of data science, deep learning, artificial intelligence, or machine learning. Having just completed the IBM A.I. Engineer course I feel more confident about my capabilities in pursuing a career in my chosen field(s). Until just recently I had always felt insecure about my skill level and whether or not I was good enough to get paid to work in such competitive fields. But with proper self-management, perseverance, and hard work I was able to get to this point where I believe that I can accomplish what I have set out to do. My second and midterm goal is to complete my bachelor's degree and enroll in a master's program in artificial intelligence or another closely related field. I am still not exactly sure how I'm going to accomplish this, the way I see it there are three ways to approach this. The first being the school only approach, where I would focus solely on school and try to get my degree as fast as I can. Another would be to work and pursue my studies. This path would have the added benefit of valuable industry experience with the disadvantage of not receiving my degree for a while longer. The third would be a combination of the two, where I would work intermittently, likely doing internships, and saving up money to focus on school the rest of the year. I am leaning more towards the combination option as it has the best of both worlds. I have a lot of goals long and short term, and at first, I wanted to write about a monetary goal. I then thought that money is not that important, and I wanted to write about something that means more to me, and who I am as a person. So for my last goal, I want to complete an ultra marathon, and meet whatever goal I set for it. There are a lot of races I want to do, and all of them are among the most difficult on our planet. There is one particular race I have in mind, called Vol State. The race is a 500K, most of it is in Tennessee (USA) but crosses into 3 others for a smaller portion of the race. My goal for the race is to complete it in less than 48 hours. A very difficult number to reach, but with hard work and proper training, I believe that it is possible and that I can do it.

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