

The challenges you get

I knew a man who went to school to be an engineer. He loved engineering and dreamed of opening his own firm.

But the truth is...he never got the chance.

His father was also an engineer and designed many important structures. But his father never got the credit this work and he spent his life in a courtroom fighting for his father's legacy.

When I am asked him if he considered his life wasted by the fact he never practiced his chosen field he answered, "No...it's one of the things I'm most proud of. We all expect to face the challenges we train for, that we're best suited for, but the truth is you get the challenges you get, and I'm proud I didn't run away from them."

And I realized what an important component to mental health that was, the ability to face the challenges that come, particularly when they don't fit into your life plan.

Most likely the hardest things that come our way in life will *not* be exactly the things we expect or train for.

We have to forgive ourselves for struggling with them. So many times I will see wonderful people who happen to get problems that play to their weaknesses rather than their strengths. Unfortunately, when this happens they tend to berate themselves for their performance rather than realize *why* they are performing so poorly.

Dealing with a problem that hits your weaknesses takes a different mindset. You focus more on avoiding catastrophic failure and less on perfect performance. Imagine if I asked you to throw a ball with your opposite hand as accurately as you could. You would know right away that a "great" performance in this task was unlikely and instead you would focus on giving a reasonable one with your limited capability.

An important component of mental wellness is supporting ourselves through challenges that play to our weakest areas.