



When the answer is NO, turn it into a NOT YET

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What happens when you do everything possible, train harder, get stronger, yet you still get cut from the team?

What happens when you improved from last year, but you still don't make the varsity team?

What happens when your role is different from what you expected or wanted it to be?

What if your best is not good enough?

All of these scenarios are hard to experience and can produce feelings of sadness, frustration, confusion, and self-doubt: which are all normal and valid. And though these experiences offer an opportunity to lean into your emotions, you need to embrace your strengths, and say yes to the opportunity for growth and new experiences. That all starts with a mindset shift.

When you are able to shift your mindset, you are able to shift your emotions. Here are four ways to train your brain and shift your mindset:

1. Celebrate your courageous action.

It takes courage to try out for a new team or play a new position. Acknowledge the fact that you overcame feelings of nervousness and overcame any thought of self-doubt to step onto the field. Celebrate the fact that you put in the effort into the process, not the final result. There are plenty of girls who stayed in bed today and chose not to do the hard things. Choosing to show up and choosing to put yourself out there takes courage. Courageous actions lead to increased confidence. Now, when you are ready to try out for your next opportunity, you already have done one hard thing, and now you have a little more confidence to do the next.

2. Use failure as feedback.

The term failure gets a bad rap. Why? Because as humans, we tend to associate failure (i.e. not getting selected for a specific team) with our self-belief systems. In reality, it is not about you at all. It's about the sport. Sometimes, your best is not enough when measured up to someone else's best. Instead of spiraling down a negative feedback loop of self-sabotage and questioning your ability because of someone else's accomplishments, shift your mindset by turning failure into an opportunity to try something else, or use it as brain fuel to train differently, commit to improvement for growth, and even come back stronger for the next year or later in the season. Your best ultimately can be the best somewhere else.

3. Embrace your strengths.

In times of failure, your focus narrows more on your identity as an athlete rather than your identity as a person. Identifying as an athlete is just ONE of many identities that you have. You are also a student, sister, daughter, leader, advocate, helper, doer, friend, etc.

When you take time to identify multiple identities, you will open up the lane to take part in so many opportunities that are offered at VMA. If you like to move and be active, try another sport or get a friend to work out in the weight room. If you like to be part of a team, join a club. If you are struggling to find your niche, come talk to a counselor, teacher, athletic director, and we will help guide you along the right path.

4. Acknowledge emotion. Feel emotion. Use emotion to fuel your fire.

Feeling emotions are healthy. Use them to open new doors and to say yes to other opportunities. Your true growth and potential is not found in the NO given now, it's found in your YES to keep moving forward.

When one door closes, many more are waiting to be opened. It is up to you to open those doors of limitless possibility.