

Never Give Up

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Do not fear failure but rather fear not trying - Roy T. Bennett

EXT. PARK - DAY

A quiet suburban park. Marissa, 32 places a bluetooth speaker on the ground. With quiet determination, she fiddles with her phone and a music track begins, a track that could only be described as 'motivational dance'.

Marissa begins a series of movements that some could consider to be dancing. Numerous passers by take notice, but not enough to stop.

Marissa's dance continues. The motivational dance music continues and we are presented with various quotes as lyrics:

"Success is not the absence of failure; it's the persistence through failure - Aisha Tyler"

"Fear of failure must never be a reason not to try something - Frederick W. Smith"

Marissa's steely intent does not falter, even if her dance moves leave something to be desired.

There is no such thing as failure. There are only results - Tony Robbins

TITLE: Never Give Up (A Horror Story)

EXT. PARK - DAY - CHAPTER 1 - YOU GOT TO START SOMEWHERE

A group of lads take notice of Marissa and her dance. The group begin to egg on Steve, 28 who plucks up the courage to approach, with a cheeky grin spread across his face.

STEVE

You homeless?

MARISSA

Not to be 'that guy' but the preferred term is 'experiencing houseless' but no, I'm not.

STEVE

So what are you doing?

MARISSA

I'm following my dream.

STEVE

Your dream?

MARISSA
Yeah, my dream.

STEVE
Your dream of dancing alone in a park?

MARISSA
Well not exactly, but you gotta start somewhere you know?

STEVE
You got a boyfriend?

MARISSA
Nope.

STEVE
You want to grab a drink?

MARISSA
No thanks.

The image freeze frames and we hear the voice of an omnipotent narrator.

NARRATOR
At this point, our hero would normally be hounded by the dudes.

The image unfreezes and plays out with no audio. Marisa is surrounded and hassled by the lads, all whilst attempting to continue the dance.

NARRATOR
They would probably not take...

The audio returns for just long enough for us to hear Marisa say:

MARISSA
No!

The audio goes away again and the action continues.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
...for an answer and the situation would probably degenerate to the lowest common form of...

The audio returns again just to hear:

STEVE
Fuck you!

The audio goes away again. Marissa doesn't stop dancing, even whilst hassled and surrounded.

NARRATOR

But thankfully, this film isn't about this particular horror of society.

The image goes into rewind and drops us back into Marissa saying:

MARISSA

No thanks.

Steve tips his cap and now responds positively.

STEVE

Oh, okay. Well good luck achieving your dream.

MARISSA

Thanks.

EXT. PARK - DAY - CHAPTER 2 - COMMITMENT

The lads meander away and Marissa continues dancing, even as her phone rings. She fumbles for a moment, finding a bluetooth headphone but never stops dancing.

The screen splits in two, to reveal Dad, an older chap with a calm and gentle demeanor.

DAD

High honey. Just wanted to check in and see how it's going?

MARISSA

Going well.

DAD

How's work?

MARISSA

I gave it up.

DAD

You gave up work?

MARISSA

Yep. To follow my dream.

DAD

Oh right. How's that going?

Marissa begins talking as if remembering a motivational quote.

MARISSA

I spent way too long not going for what I really wanted so I made the executive decision to just go for it.

The image freezes again.

NARRATOR

For any film students watching, our protagonist now has a defined 'want' - you can relax.

The image unfreezes.

DAD

Oh right.

MARISSA

I will never give up. Today will be hard, tomorrow will be worse, but the day after tomorrow will be sunshine.

It begins raining.

DAD

Okay. Well it's good that we live in a fictional universe where we do not have the worry of ensuring enough income to be able to cloth, feed and house ourselves so I support your decision and am proud of you and believe that you will be successful in whatever you choose to put your mind to.

MARISSA

Thanks Dad.

DAD

I love you because again, I am a fictional representation of a parental figure who knows how to express themselves and now the audience will never see me again. Good luck with your dream.

MARISSA

Thanks Dad.

EXT. PARK - DAY - CHAPTER 3 - SACRIFICE

Marissa hangs up and Dad's side of the screen disappears, to never be seen again.

LLANA (O.S.)

Hey babe.

Marissa looks up, to see the wide-eyed and concerned Llana. Marissa is shocked, but doesn't stop dancing.

LLANA

I didn't know where you'd gone.

Marissa is a little sheepish in her response.

MARISSA

I told you. I needed to go for it.
If I didn't do it now, I would
forever look back on my life and
wonder what could have been.

Llana looks hurt.

MARISSA

You know how important this is to
me.

LLANA

We can do this together!

Llana starts to half-heartedly dance, but you can tell that's she's not really into it.

MARISSA

I'm sorry.

LLANA

Me too. You will remember me won't
you?

Marissa returns a heart-wrenching smile, but the dance never falters. Llana moves in and matches Marissa's pace, landing a broken-kiss that signals the end of a relationship.

They stare into each other's eyes for what seems like an eternity until Marissa breaks the tension, stopping her dance.

MARISSA

You're going to need to move out
of frame now, just incase we need
to easily cut out the
representation of a same sex
relationship on screen.

(MORE)

MARISSA (CONT'D)
You know, in the same way that
Disney does if they're hoping to
release a film in China.

Llana looks hurt. Marissa shrugs. Llana is still in the moment
and still feeling every beat of their break up.

LLANA
I understand. I love you.

She moves a few steps over. Marissa gestures for her to move a
few additional steps over. The camera reframes, ensuring that
Llana is now out of frame. Marissa whispers off-screen

MARISSA (whispering)
I love you.

LLANA (O.S.)
I love...

Llana's final line is cut short as Marissa resumes dancing.

EXT. PARK - DAY - CHAPTER 4 - DEFEAT

Marissa's dance is now somewhat more intense. We are beginning
to feel the pain and exhaustion of this determination.

As the dance continues, we begin to hear a voice off-screen.

MARSHALL (O.S.)
You have lost everyone and
everything that you had. You've
compromised your own morals. Was
this all really worth it?

MARISSA
It's okay to be scared, but fear
is different. Fear is when we let
being scared prevent us from doing
what love requires of us.

Marissa keeps dancing.

MARSHALL (O.S.)
What if you're just not good
enough? What if you are just not
meant to achieve your dream?

The camera pulls out to reveal Marshall, stood just to the side
of Marissa.

MARSHALL
You suck. You're useless.

MARISSA
Get out of my head.

MARSHALL
It's laughable how bad you are at
this. You really think anyone will
ever care?

MARISSA
Leave me alone!

Marissa keeps dancing.

MARSHALL
You will never get anywhere.
You're only destined to fail!

Marshall pushes Marissa, just as the image freezes.

NARRATOR
The role of the aggressor shall be
altered in this scene as the
filmmakers felt very uncomfortable
portraying this violence on
screen. Somehow it seemed more
acceptable with Marshall here
being the victim instead.

The image unfreezes and the pair awkwardly switch places,
Marshall looking very unsure.

NARRATOR
Could this be considered sexist?
We really don't know but we do
know that Marshall is okay being
portrayed as the one being
punched. Isn't that right
Marshall.

Marshall pauses and looks directly to the audience with an
expression of unsure concern.

MARSHALL
Yes, it is?

NARRATOR
What is?

MARSHALL
I am fine being portrayed as the
one being punched...

The image freezes once more.

NARRATOR

Good.

The image unfreezes and now the actors playing Marissa and Marshall have swapped costumes and hairstyles. Marshall(Marissa) pushes Marissa(Marshall) against a wall.

MARSHALL(MARISSA)

You suck!

MARISSA(MARSHALL)

I won't let you hold me down.

MARSHALL(MARISSA) gets punched in the face.

MARSHALL(MARISSA)

You suck!

MARISSA(MARSHALL)

I won't let you hold me down.

MARSHALL(MARISSA) gets punched in the face. The character portrayals flicker back and forth, returning to their original performers, as Marissa collapses to a heap on the ground, tears rolling down her face.

Marshall scarpers, echoing out a sinister chuckle.

Marissa is completely defeated, not even attempting to get up. As Marissa lies in a heap, a gentle couple, Wendi and Gra notice Marissa's predicament.

WENDI

Honey. Are you okay?

Gra chips in.

GRA

I don't know if honey is an acceptable term of endearment to a stranger.

Marissa just about responds.

MARISSA

They're right. This is pointless. I am a failure.

WENDI

No - You can't give up!

Marissa looks up, through her tears.

WENDI

The only ones who never make it
are the ones who gave up!

MARISSA

What do you mean?

GRA

When you quit. Nothing happens.

WENDI

I once saw Richard E Grant in a
coffee shop, so you never know
what's possible! I bet he knows
all kinds of people that could
give you an opportunity to live
your dream. This world is full of
opportunity and as long as you
believe in yourself, there isn't
nothing you can't achieve!

Marissa begins to wipe away some tears.

MARISSA

Despite being unsure about your
use of a double negative, you're
right!

WENDI

That's the spirit.

MARISSA

Now if you'll excuse me. I have a
dream to pursue.

Wendi and Gra nod in approval as they leave Marissa to get back
to what she was destined to do.

Marissa commences a new, and more confident dance. The moves
have not changed, but the determination is steelier. There is
nothing that will deter her from achieving her dream.

As Wendi and Gra shuffle away, they mutter to each other.

GRA

Should you tell her that that was
all bullshit?

WENDI

Nah, she seems happy enough.

GRA

Did you really meet Richard E
Grant?

WENDI

Yeah. Well, I didn't meet him. He picked up a coffee and I watched him.

GRA

Oh that's so cool.

WENDI

Yeah I thought so too.

Marissa continues dancing long into the evening as the sun begins to set. Beautifully silhouetted, her naive dream is undeterred.

The End.

"Never give up. Great things take time. Be patient"

EXT. PARK - DAY - CHAPTER 5 - EPILOGUE

Marissa, now much older, continues her dance. The years have aged her body but not her determination as she fights through pain to keep moving.

The Real End.