

Going 'till Failure
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INT. EPPLEY RECREATION CENTER - DAY

The camera shoots an establishing shot of a workout room inside Eppley Recreation Center. A myriad of weights dropping followed by their clangs can be heard while this shot continues.

Soon enough, however, we close in on one bench in particular. Here, we have our protagonist, JD, a 20-year-old college student, preparing for a set of bench presses. He rubs on the metal bar, slightly skidding it along the handles to position it properly. He notices the weight he's about to lift and starts to scan around the area for something. He calls over a nearby student.

JD

Excuse me, you mind giving me a spot?

Still focused on JD, we hear a voice offscreen acknowledging him.

VOICE

(Offscreen)

Yeah sure.

The camera cuts to an overhead view of JD positioning himself under the bench. We still can't see the voice helping him out, but another set of words is spoken.

VOICE

(Offscreen)

So how much you going for?

JD gives this question a small thought. He pauses to collect himself and lets out a breath.

JD

I'm going 'till failure.

That being said, JD begins to push on the bar, face already shriveling up into his war face. Suddenly, the camera cuts to black.

CUT TO:

INT. JD'S DORM - MORNING

The camera cuts back to an overhead view of JD, this time sleeping in bed. Then, it switches to a shot of an alarm clock that shortly begins beeping, quickly waking him up. It is 7 a.m.

JD gets up sluggishly, dragging his body across the sheets and into a slumped-over sitting position on the edge. A voice-over of JD begins to recite some spoken word as JD goes about his morning routine.

VOICEOVER JD

(conversation between different voices)

Every day is a new day
Every day molds a new clay
Every day begins a new day
& Every day starts with today

Light piano notes play in the background as we watch JD go in and out of his room, slowly progressing from pajamas to athletic clothes.

EXT. OUTSIDE JD'S DORM - MORNING

The camera cuts to an outside view of JD's suite as the voiceover continues speaking.

VOICEOVER JD

And with every new day, we start
by taking a step
A step towards a goal that is some
x distance away
How far is it? We won't know until
it's met

We watch JD come out with his new outfit getting ready to go on what looks like a run.

VOICEOVER JD

A looming threat chases after us
until it's won
A threat called failure, it's not
too far away
Scared of what it'll do,
hesitantly, we begin to run...

JD cautiously glances at something behind him, almost as if he knows he's being followed. He pulls up his phone and opens the clock app to start a timer of 20 minutes, followed by a route going around UMD's campus. Then, he starts to run. He keeps running at an even pace as the camera follows him the best it can. The piano notes begin to sound offkey and intense.

EXT. UMD CAMPUS - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

VOICEOVER JD

What is failure?
Is it a bump in the road
Or is it a whole detour
But then what is a detour
Is it a change of plans
Or do I need to reroute and start
over

As JD continues running, he comes across a construction site with bumpy terrain and a lot of barriers blocking his way. He even comes across a large detour sign that causes some visible frustration as he changes his direction. He decides to change his route, start the timer over, and try again.

VOICEOVER JD

But then, what is starting over
Did I really hit rock bottom?
What happened to perseverance I
still got some,
Left
Right
Right again

As the voiceover speaks these lines, JD takes a left, followed by a right, and another right.

Like a leaf in the fall, I fall
Down, that's where I am

There's only so much JD can take while he's on his run. He falls down right in front of a flight of stairs.

I guess it's only UP from here

The camera switches over to a view looking down at JD from the top of the stairs.

EXT. UMD ROUNDABOUT - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

We cut back to JD continuing his run as the timer on his phone keeps running as well. He's getting progressively more tired.

VOICEOVER JD

How far up is the sky really?
Can a ladder get me back up there
Step by step, one by one
But what good is a ladder without
a wall for it to lean on
Throw it back down

JD runs past another construction site with workers standing on ladders trying to reach for something. The endless clangs and bangs from the site crush the new set of piano keys playing in the background.

VOICEOVER JD

I drown out these pessimistic
fantasies
The ones that make you wish you
could fly up endlessly
Birds seem to do it by nature
It took us till 1903 to get up
there
What if I too could fly and rise
up from here

The camera cuts to a low angle of JD's head pointing towards the sky. A flock of birds along with a plane can be seen in the distance flying overhead.

VOICEOVER JD

If only endless stairs could exist
in this reality
I'd ascend step by step and reach
the far and beyond
Along with these dreams that stem
from false prophecies
But even if I continue to keep
marching on and on
What good are these legs if they
can barely stand strong

JD races up another flight of stairs. His pace dramatically slows right after, however, as the stress of going up the stairs weakens his calves. The timer is shown once again, time's almost up.

VOICEOVER JD

I might as well go back to sleep
and dream of all these things that
keep me winning as I please
without ever feeling at odds with
peace
How good would it feel to have
success right this instant
I'd have it run to me instead and
be way less distant
Let its flame burn bright forever
persistent
Make this stress and pain feel
almost nonexistent

The camera switches over to a front view of JD running toward the camera. As he gets closer, his face's painful expression becomes more and more clear. Suddenly, his legs

give up and he collapses to the ground. While down, he lifts up his arm to check his phone. The timer beeps as he lets out a sigh. Time's up. An unknown figure runs past him as this happens. Who or what could it be?

EXT. UMD CAMPUS - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

We cut back to JD lightly jogging now. His legs can hardly keep up a faster pace. He has a bottle of water in his hand now.

VOICEOVER JD

How much pain can a human take?
They say no pain, no gain
But what if my cup is overflowing
with shame
Like I'm to blame
It's all the same
What kind of things
Can help me win this game
Raise your glass to a falling
chandelier
Lights out, there goes the flame

As JD continues jogging, his bottle cap loosens up and spills some water on the ground with each pace. He then brings it up to take a sip, but the water bottle's cap comes off and spills all the water he has.

VOICEOVER JD

I drown out these minimalistic
setbacks
No time left to ponder over
useless getbacks

JD ignores the bottle cap and keeps pushing through.

VOICEOVER JD

Make use of a metronome where time
stays on a rhythm
Keep a steady pace until you
finally make the trek back

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTIN HALL - NOON

The film begins to cut to different settings around campus with the sky visibly becoming more and more dark with each cut. The day is progressing.

VOICEOVER JD

Time shouldn't be your enemy,
treat it more like an ally

An ally who serves you tough love
cuz damn it never looks back

CUT TO:

EXT. REGENTS GARAGE - LATE NOON

VOICEOVER JD
Ruthless bastard, forever
unrelentless
You push me to my limits but at
least keep my vices ten steps back
I'm further up the line

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE CLARICE - EVENING

VOICEOVER JD
So keep pushing through cuz
failure lingers behind
Eyes focused, these diversions'
purpose is to distract

CUT TO:

EXT. ROUTE 1 - NIGHT

VOICEOVER JD
Keep it pushing, keep these legs
intact
Sooner or later, you gonna wish
you did just that
Cuz all of these distractions
(beat)

JD stops to catch his breath followed by the camera panning quickly to the right where we see a view of the McDonalds along Route 1. JD can be seen walking in. The camera quickly pans back to JD resting, looking toward the restaurant. He recollects himself and continues.

Are just that

INT. JD'S DORM - NIGHT

The camera is focused on the door to JD's suite. After a few beats, the door opens to reveal JD finally arriving home. He's exhausted, face covered in sweat. He checks his phone one more time.

JD
(panting)
25 minutes.

The camera pans following JD. We watch as he turns to go down the hallway into his room. The camera is cut when he closes the door.

EXT. LUDWIG FIELD - MORNING

An establishing shot of Ludwig Field is seen along with a view of the scoreboard. It's tranquil. JD comes into frame running through the track.

VOICEOVER JD

How do I check the score?
To see if failure is catching up
with me or see if my performance
is still poor
Where's the finish line?
Is it somewhere I can't seem to
find?
How much more time before I make
it up to the sky and have my pain
be worthy of all that grind

JD continues running in circles.

VOICEOVER JD

It's evident a human can't fly
But what keeps us thinking: shit,
we might as well try
Through trial and error, we make
it one step closer
Through trial and error, we'll
make it one day for sure

CUT TO:

EXT. UMD CAMPUS - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

We cut to JD going back on the route he used yesterday. He approaches the same stairs as before. A new water bottle is in his hand now.

VOICEOVER JD

Cuz failure always seems to catch
up with us
And when it finally does, what
happens to us
Do I give up and let it finish
first?

He climbs up the stairs, no slipping this time.

My legs can barely keep myself
going
Help me, I'm dying of thirst

He takes a sip from his water bottle, no spilling this time.

The sky's too high up and I still
can't fly
Help me, this pain is starting to
hurt

His face grimaces as he continues past the stairs.

Faster
Faster
Even faster
No wall to lean against but I
still try to climb this ladder

A steep hill follows in his route. JD pushes on through the pain to climb it.

Cause what good is success without
some sort of barrier
I'd rather earn my way up than be
pitied by my behavior
Time keeps us in check and there's
no way I can spare a year
Cuz staying in bed and sleeping
through life that's what I call
failure...

CUT TO:

INT. JD'S DORM - MORNING

As the voiceover finishes his monologue, a sleeping JD can be seen on his bed all cozied up. A beat passes.

Suddenly, the alarm from the start chirps its tune once again. The time is 7:00 AM. This time, however, it doesn't stop. JD is still fast asleep in bed. A few more beats pass.

The camera cuts to a wider view of the room, similar to the shot from earlier. The alarm keeps chirping as the title of the film, *Going 'till Failure*, pops up right in the middle of the frame. JD continues snoozing past his alarm as a few credits pop in and out. The scene ends with JD finally raising an arm to shut up the alarm only to keep sleeping. The scene cuts to black as he presses the button and slumps.

INT. EPPLEY RECREATION CENTER - DAY (SAME AS BEFORE)

We cut back to JD lifting his barbell from the very beginning. His face is grimacing intensely as he focuses on finishing his set. His arms can hardly go on, so this may be his failure rep. He shakes his head no, indicating his spotter to lift up the barbell for him. After successfully setting the barbell back in its rack, he rises from the bench and debriefs.

SPOTTER

Hey, good work, man.

They dap each other up.

More credits start to show up along the side of the frame.

SPOTTER

So, I'm still kind of new to this.
Is there a reason why you should
go 'till failure?

JD

Yeah, actually. See, when you
train 'till failure, you're
purposely damaging your muscle
fibers so that they can grow back
stronger. It's a whole lot more
complicated than that, but that's
a simple way of putting it.

SPOTTER

Ok, that makes sense.

(beat)

So it's part of the process.

JD nods his head in approval, the camera slowly zooming in closer to his expression.

JD

Yep. Trust the process.

Cut to black

The End