



A light rain had been falling for several hours on my first morning in the Smoky Mountain National Park. So I break out an umbrella and hold it over my camera as I venture into the woods just off the beaten path. Every time I walk into a forest like this, several things always catch my attention. First, it is the size of these massive trees; I love to stand and lift my eyes toward heaven and try to take in their magnitude. Secondly, on this trip it was their leaves; so colorful, so diverse and perhaps the most amazing was how they were falling. It looked like a massive snowstorm except the flakes were composted of leaves dipped in a rainbow, falling so hard that I could not see 100 feet in front of me.

Thirdly, the fallen trees scattered throughout the forest. A couple of weeks ago a storm came through this area with wind gusts of 100 mph and brought down many strong trees. Of course the tree in this photo was not toppled recently, because of the presence of the molds, moss, ferns and mushrooms; you can tell this tree had been here a long time. The thing that drew me to this particular tree was how nature was recycling this mighty fallen giant. Something new was being born out of the death of this tree. The forest was salvaging and transforming this tree into something fresh and wonderful to behold.

We could learn a lesson from the forest. We are going to stumble and fall as we travel through life. That is a cold hard fact. The winds are going to blow against us, the earth beneath our feet will sometimes give way and we will plunge to the ground. But, what happens next may be the most important time in your life. What are you going to do when you have fallen? Today, I am here to whisper into your ear and tell you that you can get back up. Failure isn't fatal. It does not matter what you have done or how big the mistake, you can choose to get

back up and start over fresh. Failure is not falling down; it is remaining there when you have fallen. You don't drown by falling in the water, you drown by staying there.

When you fall, remember you can get up and start over. Who knows, what seems to be the end may really be a new beginning. Begin again!

Something to think about:

- ❖ A failure is not someone who has tried and failed; it is someone who has given up trying and resigned himself to failure; it is not a condition, but an attitude.
- ❖ Failure is not the worst thing in the world. The worst is not to try.
- ❖ Great accomplishments are often attempted but only occasionally reached. Those who reach them are usually those who missed many times before. Failures are only temporary tests to prepare us for permanent triumphs.
- ❖ I've never met a person, I don't care what his condition is, in whom I could not see possibilities. I don't care how much a man may consider himself a failure, I believe in him, for he can change the thing that is wrong in his life any time he is ready and prepared to do it. Whenever he develops the desire, he can take away from his life the thing that is defeating it. The capacity for reformation and change lies within.
- ❖ If at first you don't succeed, relax; you're just like the rest of us.

Make kindling out of a fallen tree.
Rickey Moore