

4 LESSONS LEARNED FROM FALLING OFF OF THINGS



Want to know the secret to not falling? Hint: It's not looking down.

By Bethany Bartholomew

I've learned a lot over the years. And being at least a little bit clumsy, I've learned many life lessons from falling off of things.

When I fell off of my scooter, I learned to be honest with my dad about the gash in my foot, even though I was terrified that he would tell me I had to go to the doctor to get stitches.


When I fell off of the balance beam in gymnastics, I learned to get up and try again before my fears kept me from ever getting back on a balance beam again.

When I fell off of a bike while trying to pass my cousins in their go-kart, I learned to not collide with a go-kart and, more importantly, to be patient.

But one of the most valuable lessons I've learned from falling off of things was actually one that I learned from repeatedly falling off of my own foot.

Let me explain.

I spent years in ballet classes learning leaps, turns, stretches, and steps. But there was one thing that I just could not get, no matter how much I practiced: pirouettes. I had failed so many times to



turn around in a full circle while balancing on my toes on one foot that I was convinced I just could not do it.

Then one day my teacher explained a valuable principle to the class. Whenever we would fall down in the middle of a pirouette, she would usually offer advice such as “Turn your head faster” or “Bring your other foot to your knee faster.” But this time she asked me, “Where are you falling?”

I was surprised. I thought it was pretty obvious. I was falling *down*.

My teacher asked again, “Which direction are you falling? Are you falling forward? backward? to the side?”

I said I usually fell forward.

“Then you’re probably looking down,” she explained. “Look up, and try again.”

I did as she said, but this time I fell backward.

“That’s good,” she said, smiling.

She said that our heads are actually very heavy, and they direct where we will go. She stood on one foot, looked down at the ground, and started to fall forward. Then she tried it again with her head tilted back, and she started to fall backward.

“So,” she said, “pay attention to where you’re falling. It has a lot to do with where your head is.”

I’ve thought about that lesson for years: *Where was my head?* Was I always looking down or thinking negative thoughts about myself? Was I looking to the side and comparing myself to those around me? Was I looking backward and focusing too much on the past?

I’ve learned that the best direction to look is up, toward the light.

The path that leads to eternal life and eternal happiness with Heavenly Father is straight and narrow, and if we look in any other direction, that’s where we’re going to go—we’ll stray from the path. So I learned to look to the Savior. He would help me to stay on the path, and He would pick me up when I fell down.

Looking up, thinking positive thoughts, and staying focused on what mattered most helped me to persevere through difficult dance classes, and it has helped me to build my testimony and stay on the path that has led me to incredible blessings. I’m glad I learned that difficult lesson from falling off of my own feet—I learned to look up. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

“Just a little too much oomph the other way. Try again.”

I spun again, this time looking up, focusing in front of me so that I could keep my head centered over the rest of my body.

“Nicely done!” my teacher said when I successfully completed the turn.

She then gathered the rest of the class and explained to us why she had asked me where I was falling.



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