

## ***Falling Does Not Equal Failing***

(A ropes course story from Faulkner University.)

Her name is Shannon. She was scared. I don't mean a little. I mean hold your breath and continue to shake well after the event is over. (This was on the low element known as the "Trust Fall"). Now, she was standing on top of a telephone pole. The only thing between her and the ground was 10.5 millimeters. Okay let me clear that one up. She was actually 31 feet from the ground. A piece of rope with a thickness of 10.5 millimeters was keeping her from hitting the ground if she fell or when she jumped. The Pamper Pole is a simple test of commitment. A participant climbs up and then has to stand up on top of the pole. The last step is about 18 inches and must be done one foot at a time. There is nothing to hold on to.

The whole exercise looks like "*The Karate Kid*" meets "*Fear Factor*." As Shannon tried to stand up she lost her balance and fell off the pole. I was holding her rope and caught her easily. As I lowered her to the ground she only said, "I'm going back up." And up she went...3 more times. Each time she lost her balance and fell off she simply turned and climbed the pole again. She finally stood, kept her balance and jumped of her own accord.

Courage is not not being afraid. Courage is acting appropriately in the face of fear. Endurance is not running 26 miles and not hurting. Endurance is running 26 miles after you started hurting at mile 13. Faithfulness is not about not falling. Faithfulness is about getting up, with tears in your eyes, after you've fallen, and climbing up again, and again, and again.

I don't have to wish the Lady Eagles success. I've seen what they are made of. Success is not about not losing or even winning...success is about not quitting.

—Lonnie Jones