

Science Lesson #9  
*Falling and Getting Back Up*  
(What is Gravity?)

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[Introduction to Fables and Science](#)

## Falling

- Is not **Falling** one of the things we do best?
- Walking is **Falling**.
- We **Fall** in love.
- Planets are **Falling** in their orbits.
- We **Fall** for a joke.
- Why are so many human sports records **Falling** so fast and so far?



## Gravity

If you ask almost any student why things fall, she or he will probably say, "It falls because of gravity." And, although the student would be right - does that explain anything, or does it simply give a name to this incredible force that we really DO NOT KNOW? The wonder and awe that gravity exists, how it works, and why it is here remains.

As the humans left, the first evergreen observed, "I see what you mean. They can name things instead of seeing them, knowing them, or appreciating their beauty. They just named gravity - and I am quite sure they hardly know what gravity is. Perhaps names sometimes label that which is NOT understood." (Bickart, 2020b, p. 10)

Somewhat to my surprise, I found myself saying, "You know kids, once gravity gets hold of a planet, it pretty much forces the planet to move the way it wants it to. It's like a parent that makes you do something, even if you have totally other ideas." Now, I checked the room for a reaction. With a loaded statement like that, it's very unlikely NOT to get a strong reaction from teenagers. But then the real fun started. I pushed further, "But you know, gravity is just a

force. Its JOB is to force things. It seems to have been made to always force things. If you wish it to be something else, you will be sorely disappointed. Wait a minute. Imagine this. Try going up to gravity and saying, 'Hey gravity, could you pleeeeeeeeeeease just this once not force me down. How about it. Just don't pull me down this one time.' Do you really think gravity would listen? Would it make an exception just for you? I mean, seriously, you want gravity to not be gravity? Forget about it. You could spend your whole life dependent on the hopes that gravity will some day stop forcing you the way it always does; and it will only lead to disappointment. Your only hope with gravity is to become independent of gravity's behavior. You must protect yourself from becoming dependent on the fact that it will inevitably do its job." I ended my lesson with the obvious correlation to psychology - "Hey kids, does this sound like I'm talking about your parents?" (Bickart, 2018, pp. 36-37)

See the whole chapter from which this is extracted: [Chapter 4, "Marvin's Sacrifice" from the book, \*The Next Version of You\*](#) (Bickart, 2018).

Check out the video on this lesson to see what I mean.

[\[Play video here to see live demonstration.\]](#)

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Here are some fables that may help you deal with these issues:

[\[Fable #53\]](#) [\[Fable # 3\]](#) [\[Fable #34\]](#) [\[Fable #36\]](#) [\[Fable #58\]](#)  
[\[Fable #90\]](#) [\[Fable #91\]](#) [\[Fable #105\]](#) [\[Fable #108\]](#) [\[Fable #109\]](#)  
[\[Fable #118\]](#) (Bickart, 2020a, Volume 1; 2020b, Volume 2; 2020c, Volume 3). And below is one of my favorite fables that reminds about looking back, after naming.



## #58 *The First Fall*



*The first mushroom grew up to reach the sunlight. It grew old, then dying, it fell back to the earth. Just as it hit the ground, an angel appeared. As long as there was someone to ask, the mushroom spoke up, "Wait a minute." it inquired of the angel, "Is that it? I have to fall down? Why can't I stay standing?" "Your act of falling will cause more mushrooms to grow and allow you to develop to the next version of yourself," answered the angel. The mushroom, still perplexed asked, "But it felt like it was good to grow up - to stand up, and it felt like falling down was failing." The angel smiled with a glowing reassurance, "You need to do both. Growing upwards through the soil to the light is a victory, but falling is just as necessary. The rock planets are falling in their orbits. The animals walk by falling forward. The humans live for the experience of falling in love. And perhaps the crowning achievement of creation is the ability to fall for a joke."*

*FALLING MAY JUST BE WHAT WE DO BEST*

## Why Use Fables to Teach Science?

### *Here's a Provocative Thought ...*

Is Falling bad or good? Is Gravity bad or good? Are these silly questions or are they great questions to bring up in your science class? The psychological trauma of falling from one's expected path is something that many, many people face! Why not address it while we are studying gravity? Why let your science class be relegated to a compartment that may not deal with the whole human being?

### *Learning = Failing at Everything Else*

Well, if you do discuss such things, while studying the science of gravity, keep in mind how you learned what you know. Gravity teaches standing. As for falling ... as fable #118 (Bickart, 2020c, Volume 3) reminds us, as a father and son discuss failure ... the father reminds the boy that ... *in his life, he has already tried all of the ways that do not work.*

# *The First Fall*

## **Conversation Starters**

- Do you remember a time that you fell down? Was it a psychological fall or a physical fall?
- Did you like falling? Was it fun or funny or not?
- What do you think you might learn from a fall?
- What do you think could be one meaning of saying, “Falling feels like failing?” Could failing ever be helpful or beneficial?
- What do you think the expression “falling in love” means. What about “falling for a joke.”
- Do you think there is any connection between the scientific act of falling from gravity and the psychological act of falling for a joke or falling in love?
- Who do you think ‘we’ refers to in the final statement, “*FALLING MAY JUST BE WHAT WE DO BEST*”?

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## **References**

- Bickart, J. (2018). *The next version of you: 12 stories that highlight the use of intuition to update your life.*
- Bickart, J. (2020a). *Bickart’s Just-in-Time Fables (Volume 1)* (Vol. 1). Asheville, NC: Red Shirt Interactive Group.
- Bickart, J. (2020b). *Bickart’s Just-in-Time Fables (Volume 2)* (Vol. 2). Asheville, NC: Red Shirt Interactive Group.

Bickart, J. (2020c). *Bickart's Just-in-Time Fables (Volume 3)*  
(Vol. 3). Asheville, NC: Red Shirt Interactive Group.