

Making Failure Your Friend

Volume 1: Lesson 9

Lesson Thesis: Your psychological and physiological responses to failure do more to encourage or eliminate achievement than any single force.

You are either failure resistant or failure resilient.
Todd Duncan

I always felt that although someone may defeat me, and I strike out in a ball game, the pitcher on the particular day was the best player. But I know when I see him again, I'm going to be ready for his curve ball. Failure is part of success. There is no such thing as a bed of roses in your life. But failure will never stand in the way of success if you learn from it.
Hank Aaron

Leap!

Daring to do the unexpected can be scary- it's tempting to think more about what you might lose than what you could gain. But when you view a risk as an opportunity, there's no limit to what you can do. That's why you should always be encouraged to try something new, to be unpredictable, to experiment. You don't always have to hazard large things – even a small change can point you toward a fresh experience. It can be invigorating to take the road you have not traveled.

Major Point: Successful people interpret and respond to failure differently than unsuccessful people.

Successful people see failure

As a _____
As a _____
As an _____
As _____
As a _____
As _____
As an _____
As a _____
As a _____
As _____

Unsuccessful people see failure

As a _____
As a _____
As an _____
As _____
As a _____
As _____
As an _____
As a _____
As a _____
As _____

The Champions Creed

You're not judged by the number of times you fail but by the number of times you succeed. The number of times you succeed is in direct proportion to the number of times you fail and keep on trying.
Tom Hopkins, *How To Master The Art of Selling Anything*

Success

*The timid and fearful first failures dismay,
But the stout heart stays trying by night and by day.
He values his failures as lessons that teach,
The one way to get to the goal he would reach.*
Edgar Albert Guest

10 Lessons From My Personal Failures

Lesson #1: The greater the _____, the greater the _____ for failure and success.

I have always been more afraid of failing than hopeful of success.
William Feather

The greatest mistake in life is to be continually fearing you will make one.
Elbert Hubbard

Ask yourself: Do I risk losing more by not trying?

Lesson #2: Playing it safe _____ your potential to fail. So does playing to
_____. The difference is that only the latter _____ successes.

*You can live on bland food so as to avoid an ulcer; drink no tea or coffee or other
stimulants in the name of health; go to bed early and stay away from nightlife; avoid all
controversial subjects so as never to give offense;
mind your own business and avoid involvement in other peoples' problems; spend money
only on necessities and save all you can.*

You can still break your neck in the bathtub, and it will serve you right.
Eileen Guder,
But God I'm Bored

Ask yourself: Is my desire to "feel" safe more important than fostering success in my life?

Lesson #3: You either _____ through failure or _____ through failure. The choice is yours.

Strong people make as many and as ghastly mistakes as weak people. The difference is that strong people admit them, laugh at them, learn from them. That is how they become strong.

Alan Loy McGinnis, *Bringing Out the Best in People*

Ask yourself: What have I learned from my failures?

Lesson #4: Never _____ your _____ away to an event that has not yet occurred.

Failure seldom stops you; what stops you is the fear of failure.
Jack Lemmon

Ask yourself: Is my projection of failure keeping me from trying?

Lesson #5: _____ failures indicate that you haven't _____ the _____.

Too many people, when they make a mistake, just keep stubbornly plowing ahead and end up repeating the same mistakes. I believe in the motto, 'Try and try again.' But the way I read it, it says, 'Try, then stop and think. Then try again.'
William Dean Singleton

Ask yourself: Do I have any repeated failures? What do I need to learn so that it doesn't happen again?

Lesson #6: _____ decisions usually create unnecessary failures.

The understanding that underlies the right decision grows out of the clash and conflict of opinions and out of the serious consideration of competing alternatives.
Peter Drucker

Ask yourself: Have I weighed my options? Have I calculated the risk? Have I determined the best course of action that will promote success?

Lesson #7: If you have _____, you will _____ any failure.

More than anything else, what keeps a person going in the midst of adversity is having a sense of purpose. It is the fuel that powers persistence.
John C. Maxwell

When I was a child my mother said to me, 'If you become a soldier, you will become a general; if you become a monk, then you will end up as pope.' Instead I became a painter and wound up as Picasso.
Pablo Picasso

Ask yourself: Do I have a vision for what I want to accomplish – in life, through my work, with and for my family?

Lesson #8: _____ reduces risk of failure and _____ the _____.

Learn from the mistakes of others as much as possible because you will never live long enough to make them all yourself.
Todd Duncan

Ask yourself: Am I continually seeking lessons from the experiences of others?

Lesson #9: _____ of _____ will guide you through any failure.

The chief factor in any man's success or failure must be his own character.
Theodore Roosevelt

Ask yourself: What are the "non-negotiables" in my life? Do they affect my reaction to failure?

Lesson #10: Failure is _____ for success to _____.

While one person hesitates because he feels inferior, he other is busy making mistakes and becoming superior.
Henry C. Link

If you want to double your success rate, double your failure rate.
Thomas Watson,
Former president, IBM

Ask yourself: How often do I fail? How often do I succeed?

How To Make Failure Your Friend

Action #1: _____ your _____ toward failure and you will change your _____ of failure.

The difference between greatness and mediocrity is often how an individual views a mistake.
Nelson Boswell

Don't fear failure. Change your _____: Never see failure as failure but rather as an opportunity to...

- Reject _____
- Improve your _____
- _____ your _____
- Temporarily _____
- Take a _____ inventory
- Jettison a _____
- _____ figure out what doesn't work
- Take _____ step

Action #2: Determine your failure strategy.

Don't waste energy trying to cover up failure. Learn from your failures and go on to the next challenge. It's okay to fail. If you're not failing, you're not growing.
H. Stanley Judd

Never expect failure, but predetermine what your course of action will be when a failure occurs.

In his book *Failing Forward*, leadership guru John Maxwell offers the following acronym that will help you keep failure in proper perspective and develop a healthy failure strategy.

Messages that give us feedback about life
Interruptions that should cause us to reflect and think
Signposts that direct us to the right path
Tests that push us toward greater maturity
Awakenings that keep us in the game mentally
Keys that we can use to unlock the next door of opportunity
Explorations that let us journey where we've never been before
Statements about our development and progress

Action #3: _____ for failure.

*People are training for success when they should be training for failure.
Failure is far more common than success.*
J. Wallace Hamilton

In life, the question is not whether you will fail, but rather how prepared you are to deal with failure when it occurs. Get in the habit of making the most of your mistakes. The more times you fail forward, the more efficient you become at turning failures into successes.

Action #4: Be _____ oriented. See every failure as _____.

Failure after a long persistence is much grander than never to have a striving good enough to be called a failure.
George Eliot

Every road to success will pass through the land of failure. Strive after something worth failing for.

Action #5: Commit to never _____.

Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.
Thomas Edison

The only failure in life is to allow mistakes to keep you from your goals and dreams. Remember that action always reduces fear. Never stop moving forward.

Action #6: Understand that _____ are never a failure, only your _____ is.

*What you have to tell yourself is, I'm not a failure. I failed at doing something.
There's a big difference.*
Erma Bombeck

You are never a failure so long as you keep trying. But if you continue to fail on your way to achieving a goal, it's probably time to rethink your success strategy.

Idea #7: Mistakes should _____ you and give you new _____ towards the direction of your dreams.

Experience is not what happens to you. Experience is what you do with what happens to you.
Aldous Huxley

It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it. Instead of making excuses, make progress. Take responsibility and move forward in a better direction.

Don't be like these people who wrote the following explanations for the auto accidents in which they were involved:

- As I reached an intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision.
- An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished.
- The telephone pole was approaching fast. I attempted to swerve out of its path when it struck my front end.
- To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front, I struck the pedestrian.
- I had been driving my car for four years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.
- I was on the way to the doctor's office with rear-end trouble when my universal joint gave way, causing me to have an accident.
- I was coming home, pulled into the wrong driveway, and hit a tree I did not have.
- The guy was all over the road and I had to swerve a number of times before hitting him.
- I pulled away at the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment.

Adapted from *Failing Forward*, John C. Maxwell

Final Thoughts: Even the most experienced, most gifted, and most successful people, make stupid mistakes. They are an inevitable part of life. Letting mistakes keep you from your dreams is not. Consider the following story about Charles Lindbergh:

On a flight to Mexico in 1927 Lindbergh encountered rainy, foggy weather. It soon became apparent that, once he had crossed over from Texas, he had lost his way. Railroad tracks on the ground provided a landmark of sorts, and he followed them, flying low until he saw a railroad

station sign that read "Caballeros." But he could not find Caballeros on his map. Onward he flew until he reached the next station sign, which also read "Caballeros." Again he continued in the same direction and only gradually did he finally realize that the signs he was reading indicated the entrance to the men's bathrooms.

Answers: Setup; Setback; Lesson; Liability; Experience; Excuse; Humorous; Humiliating; Friend; Foe; Freeing; Final; Opportunity; Obstacle; Stepping Stone; Stumbling Block; Wing; Weight; Positive; Negative; Risk; Potential; Increases; Win; Creates; Go; Grow; Give; Power; Repeated; Learned; Lesson; Fast; Vision; Survive; Modeling; Improves; Odds; Clarity; Values; Necessary; Occur; Change; Attitude; Interpretation; Self-Talk; Mediocrity; Sense of Humor; Increase; Expectations; Regroup; Skills; Bad Strategy; Successfully; One More; Train; Big Picture; Temporary; Give Up; You; Strategy; Motivate; Momentum