

EMBRACE FAILURE.

This may be one of my most controversial thoughts... to **EMBRACE FAILURE**. Whenever I share that in speaking or training or coaching with an organization, it's met with an almost universal look of amazement.

"This guy's telling us it's okay to fail?"

I think the reason that this seems so contrarian or counterintuitive is that our culture is based so much on the ideas of **success** and **don't fail**, that it's very difficult to understand how important it is to:

FAIL. FAIL FAST. FAIL OFTEN.

Our education culture is based entirely on the idea that to fail is **bad**. In the athletic world, to fail (lose) is the absolute worst. In the business realm, *failure* is tied to some kind punitive response for **screwing up**.

"SUCCESS usually comes from GOOD JUDGMENT.
GOOD JUDGMENT usually comes from EXPERIENCE.
EXPERIENCE usually comes from **BAD JUDGMENT!"** (*Failure*)

Will Rogers

Based on Will's brilliant logic, I actually may be the most 'SUCCESSFUL' person around.

10-4=6. **A LIFE STRATEGY:** Ten steps forward minus four steps back (still) equals 6 steps forward!

The greatest golfer in the world, and perhaps in history, says it this way,

**"I've done some things to get everything
organized in my game. I took some steps
BACKWARD in order to make some
GIANT LEAPS FORWARD."** Go, Tiger.

(Real) 'SUCCESS' only comes after (multiple) FAILURES, both in the dictionary and in business and in life.

Nobody actually taught me early the importance of *failure*. Through intuition or instinct (or perhaps

just because I screwed up so often), I actually began to understand what these **Zen** guys were talking about when they said that **failure was the best teacher.**

It began to dawn on me that most, if not all, the people I truly admired could point to all kinds of 'failures' in their lives. You've all read the Lincoln 'failure' thing, but I'm talking about everyone that I knew personally or read about who I considered to be a huge SUCCESS (by the right definitions) had accepted failure as a part of the journey.

“The most spectacular successes have always come after equally spectacular failure.”

- Abraham Lincoln

I'm supposed to be one of the “best” salespeople and presenters around. There's a simple reason. I can teach and coach and train and speak because I have made over 6,000 one-on-one visits and sales calls... and screwed up 5,812 times. (I've kept count.) I've bombed at speeches. I've failed at relationships. I've started 19 businesses and all but a handful have actually been successful. (I started writing my first book in 1981. The problem was I only completed Chapter 7, Chapter 11 and Chapter 13. Oh well.) I've thousands of ideas that look great on paper, but only a few have actually worked.

Here's one thing that I know is true: The only real failure, the biggest failure, is FAILING TO ACT. Over 1,333 thinkers, philosophers and authors agree: Failure isn't the worst result. Not trying is the worst result. (Or, as Mr. Miyagi said to the Karate Kid, **“Don't try. DO.”**)

Steven Pressfield in that wonderful book *THE WAR OF ART*, says that Spartan King Leonidas was asked to identify the supreme warrior virtue. He replied: **“Contempt for death.”** Pressfield said we should read that as **“CONTEMPT FOR FAILURE”**.

“Failure is not an option” is stupid thinking. Being *right* usually just means being *safe*. **A person who doesn't make a mistake... doesn't make anything.**

Learn to treat failure as a tremendous sign of progress, a part of the journey to success, and as valuable lessons.

I've spent quite a bit of time learning about **CREATIVITY** and **INNOVATION**. Both of these are currently prized as the Holy Grail of Business.

Every single book, article and author says the same thing: **EMBRACE FAILURE!**

Special Note: Don't take my word on this 'FAILURE' thing. Here are some quotes and thoughts to help you get it.

“**SUCCESS** is going from *FAILURE* to *FAILURE* with no loss of enthusiasm.”

- Winston Churchill

**“One must be God to be able to distinguish
SUCCESS from FAILURES and not make mistakes.”**

- Anton Chekhov

“Relying on conventional outmoded ideas about
SUCCESS and **FAILURE** stands in the way of your
ability to **INNOVATE**, compete and stay ahead of the curve in a
changing economy (world).”

- The Key Message of The Innovation Paradox
by Farson & Keys

**“When confronting triumph or disaster,
treat these two imposters just the same.”**

- Rudyard Kipling

“Easy times are the enemy. They put us to sleep. **ADVERSITY**
(*FAILURE*) is
our greatest friend. It wakes us up.
Similarly, our dearest friend is not as good a teacher as our worst
enemy.”

- Dalai Lama

“At some point, we all have to **decide**
HOW we’re going to FAIL: by not going far enough,
or by going too far. For most people, it’s the former.”

- Harriett Rubin

**“Only those who dare to FAIL greatly
can ever ACHIEVE greatly.”**

-Robert Kennedy

“There are no *FAILURES*, just *LESSONS*.”

- Some Zen Guy

**“If you’re not living ON THE EDGE,
you’re taking up too much room.”**

- A T-Shirt

“Out on the **EDGE, you see all kinds of things
you can’t see from the center.”**

“The power of the ‘EDGE**’ is one of
today’s **most compelling** ideas.”**

- Kevin Roberts, CEO, Sachi & Sachi

**“Do you want to be safe and be ‘good’?
Or do you want to take a chance and be ‘GREAT’?”**

- Jimmy Johnson

“Living **AT RISK is jumping off the cliff and
building your wings on the way down.”**

- Ray Bradbury

**“You can put your kids in a ‘bubble’...
or you can let them try things, do things, fail, get hurt, and
actually live life. Your choice.”**

- Old Guy

“If you can’t **FAIL,
it doesn’t count.”**

- Seth Godin

Note: Call it a ‘test’, ‘prototype’, ‘skunk works’,
or, better yet, **‘PRACTICE’**.

This is the best way to help you overcome the ‘fear of failure’.