

I Can't Do That!

What is the remedy for "Fear of feeling foolish"?

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There is only one thing that can derail our most genuine commitment, our best intentions or our most ambitious goals...

Fear.

Remember when you were a teenager?

We were consumed by what other people thought of us, weren't we? Clothes, hair, language... it rolled up to whether we were connected or included or not. And then there were the all-too-frequent opportunities for us to be introduced to something new, something that we weren't yet adept in and we were faced with either exposing ourselves to the critical snickering or mockery of our all-too-disloyal compatriots or simply declining the opportunity. Declining was the easy choice. It was at the school dance where the boys were lined up on one side of the gym and the girls on the other... or the invitation by the speech teacher to volunteer first to present our homework... or the challenge by the PE teacher to test our strength on the rope climb. All opportunities for us to either step into new domains and risk humiliation by those that we so desperately wanted to like us – or play it safe. Typically we chose to play it safe and said, "Aw...I can't do that."

And that decision to play it safe is one of many fears that derail ambition and success. This fear is called *"Fear of looking Foolish"*.

You know what's weird? That clumsy, acne-faced, hormone poppin' kid is still in us, still desperately desiring to be included and accepted and – at all costs – avoid looking stupid. Meanwhile we are conflicted with a desire to succeed.

As an adult, we must do those things that are new and challenging and difficult because that is where success lives.

Without doing those things that others won't, we end up with only what others have... and that's not nearly good enough. So here is the conflict – the conflict that comes from fear of foolish.

Whaddya do? What's the remedy for Fear of Foolish?

Practice.

I know, it sounds way too easy, and maybe it is easier said than done, but here's the good news: as an adult, we can see it coming. When we were kids, it never crossed our mind that we'd risk spontaneous hilarity by our attempt to look good on the dance floor. After all, it looked so easy on Dick Clark's American Bandstand.

But as an adult, we have life's perspective to tell us what is coming. We **know** that phone calls, presentations and negotiations in front of our friends or tough prospects all contain opportunities to mess up. As adults we have the perspective of life's experiences to see these things coming.

So why wait for it to hit us in the face like the PE teacher's challenge to climb the rope. Practice! Get out an MP3 recorder and talk into the sucker – play it back and critique yourself and erase it so that you can do it again, better. Ask a trusted peer to critique your presentation or to role play an unreasonable prospect.

Practice, prepare and practice again. It's the key to overcoming Fear of looking Foolish. C'mon, are ya chicken? Practice!



Steve Dailey is the Founder of PrimeFocus Coaching and AchievementBridge, Inc. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science from Colorado State University, Steve Dailey launched his first career as a professional swimming coach. During what he calls a "laboratory experience in human performance, psychology and motivation" he built "feeder" programs for aspiring national level swimmers in Colorado, Oklahoma, Illinois, South Carolina and Texas.

As the technology "boom" rumbled to the forefront of the marketplace, Steve then narrowed his niche to coaching early stage technology companies. His coaching model offered valuable input, collaboration and direction to eager executive teams, the new executive talent they were attracting and the venture capital companies that were funding them; all in maximizing opportunities in an extraordinarily fast paced time in business history. Again, more insight was gained - this time in defining critical factors that influence success and failure in high velocity/high risk business environments.

Most recently, Steve has focused his passion for coaching in developing high-yield achievement systems for Sales Professionals, Business Executives and Entrepreneurs that include web-based tools, leading edge coaching methods and executive "coach mentoring" programs where business leaders learn to be effective coaches to their own teams. You can find out more about that at his website: PrimeFocusCoaching.com