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Using Failure to Further Your Future

Begin to tell yourself the good stuff! Change the direction of your thinking and begin to see the possibilities of success, not failure.

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1074 words | 4 pages

"You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it." Margaret Thatcher

Failure. Even the word sounds bad, doesn't it? That is because since the time we were just young children we were taught that failure was bad. But is that true? Is failure bad? Let's consider some things.

I like a baseball analogy. Do you know what the record is for a season batting average (That means how many times the batter successfully hit to get on base)? It is a gentleman by the name of Ted Williams and his season batting average was .411 one year. That means that out of 1000 times at bat he would get a hit 411 times. That is considered by baseball fans as one of the greatest records ever. There are players making millions of dollars who hit .280!

But what does that stat also tell us if we flip it around? It tells us that the best season any batter ever had in the major leagues was a FAILURE RATE of .589!

Even the best fail on a regular basis!

What about the richest people on Wall Street? Do they fail? Of course they do. They pick the bad stocks sometimes, but they cut their loses and learn from their failure.

Did Michael Jordan miss shots? Over 50% of them!

So what about all this? What does this mean for us? The fact is, I think we can learn a lot about failure that will actually make us a great success. So here are some thoughts to help you use failure to further your future!

Failure is inevitable if you are trying for greatness. Failure is something we must accept as a part of the road we travel to success. This is a very important item and number one on the list because a lot of what stops people from pursuing success is their fear that they may fail and not reach their destination. When we embrace the fact that we will fail, and that is okay, then we have nothing to fear anymore. Instead, we keep our eyes open and pick ourselves up, adjust from the failure, and move on.

Failure is never failure unless you fail to learn something from it. That's right, we ought to stop calling these bumps in the road "failures" and start calling them "Learning Experiences!" When you fail, the first thing you should think is "What can I learn from this?" If you can pull just one idea out of that question, then the experience was worth it.

Sometimes failure is a blessing in disguise. Just ask the 3M Company. They were looking for an incredible adhesive and actually got a sticky paste that held, but not permanently. What a failure! No, instead, they spread some on the back of little sheets of yellow paper and called them "Post-It Notes." Have some? I'm sure you do. The 3M company thanks you for rewarding their "failure."

People won't think poorly of you if you fail. This is perhaps the biggest myth, and the one that causes us to never attempt our dreams. We don't try because of what Aunt Martha may say about us at the family reunion.

> **The truth is, however, that people will actually respect you for trying. The only thing I have found that people think poorly about you is if you handle yourself badly when you fail. Sore losers get the bad press, not people who attempt great things!**

Failure isn't the end but the beginning. One of our greatest fears is that our whole world will collapse if we fail. Or at least the project will. The truth is that that rarely happens! Most of the time we can pick back up again, make some adjustments and be on our way! This is a new beginning. Now there is no need to go down the road you have already taken, so there is one less option you have to try on your new journey.

Sometimes we miss out on success because we quit in the middle of a problem and it becomes a failure instead of an obstacle we could have persevered through. When people encounter trouble they have a tendency to quit. And then they see themselves as having failed. My question is this: What if they would have kept on going - persevered? Perhaps they would have struggled a bit and then broke free again. The failure happened only because they quit! So don't give up - keep pushing - and perhaps you will see yourself through to victory!

The greatest thing to overcome is the fear of failure. Most of the battle is right between our ears.

It has been said that "we have nothing to fear but fear itself," and that is true because in most of our "failures," the end result is usually much less than we feared it would be. Yet in giving into fear and not trying, we suffer the ultimate consequence - no success! So begin to tell yourself the good stuff! Change the direction of your thinking and begin to see the possibilities of success, not failure.

Remember, properly looked at, failure can help you further your future!

Bonus:
Questions to ask yourself when you "fail":

What can I learn from this?
What did I do right in this?
Where did this go wrong?
How can I start again?
What resources do I need to make sure this doesn't happen again?

Then use the answers to these questions to plot your new course.

Chris Widener is an example of how anyone can overcome any odds to achieve a successful life and help others achieve the same. Chris has overcome many obstacles... living through his father dying suddenly when he was four, being sent away from his family to live with relatives at age nine and becoming involved with drugs and alcohol by the age of twelve. Chris overcame those obstacles and has for the last ten years worked with some of the most financially successful families in America, helping them to achieve both personally and professionally. Now he can do the same for you!