

“4 Steps to Overcoming Failure and Using it to Your Advantage”

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Highly successful people are the ones who have failed the most.

As the public, we usually only learn about these individuals and their companies once they have made it big. We admire their success yet rarely witness the immense struggle they went through to get there. By not being exposed to their failures, we are unfortunately only left to compare ourselves to their achievements.

This in turn can make it hard for us to validate the mistakes we make and problems we experience. We often second-guess ourselves and question our abilities; not realizing that adversity is required in order to succeed.

This way of thinking has made the world afraid of failure. Even from a young age we have been taught that being wrong and making mistakes are bad. Our mind itself uses painful memories of the past to provoke negative emotions like fear and anxiety to stop us from making those same errors today.

Award winning author J.K. Rowling, on the other hand, embraces failure: “It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all—in which case, you fail by default.”

Setbacks and failures are inevitable in life, no one is perfect, and we all fall on hard times at some point or another. But if we live so carefully to avoid failure, we’re also never teaching ourselves how to manage it effectively when we experience it. So when faced with adversity, it often overwhelms us and causes us to give up.

The question then remains, how can we train ourselves to overcome these challenges and use them to our advantage?

Here are four steps that can help you turn any negative experience into a positive outcome:

1. ACCEPT THAT FAILURE IS PART OF THE PROCESS

When times get tough, one of the most frustrating things we can hear from someone is to “stay positive.” The concept of positive thinking has been misused, misconstrued, and abused by us all.

Despite what we hear, it has nothing to do with smiling and being happy with everything that happens to you. Anyone who says that is either lying or crazy. Positive thinking, rather, is used so that we can learn, grow, and evolve from what we experience in life.

This does not mean try to fail. It simply means that if you are faced with a setback, understand it is not your final destination. It is a stepping-stone in your journey that is getting you to where you need to be.

When we do experience difficulties in life, it is okay to get down on ourselves. It is okay to get upset and disappointed. Our goal however is to not stay down.

2. LET OUT YOUR FRUSTRATION

Once you have taken some time to walk it off and clear your head, you can then begin accepting what happened. The initial emotional rush will eventually dissipate and you can then slowly return your focus back to the issue at hand.

3. BE BRUTALLY HONEST

The most critical part of the process, which 90% of people don't do, involves taking a couple of minutes to reflect on what happened and being brutally honest with ourselves on why it happened. It's easy to turn on the TV, pull out the smartphone, or find some form of distraction. Most people will do anything to avoid confronting their own self with mistakes they've made.

However, if we don't do this, we don't learn, and if we don't learn then we risk failing insanely. Albert Einstein famously said it was insane to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. If we don't learn from our mistakes and failures in life, then we are doomed to keep repeating them, whether we realize it or not.

4. FAIL FORWARD

We fail forward by learning from our setbacks and making the necessary adjustments until we succeed. Every change we make, every person we meet, and every bit of information we absorb is coming together so we can create a different outcome.

We can't stop obstacles from appearing in life, but we can choose how to handle them. They may block our vision temporarily, but if we persevere then we can discover opportunities that have always been waiting for us on the other side. As we get more efficient with this process, we enable ourselves to see the positive side in even the toughest of situations.

—**Graham Young** writes about unique strategies that support personal growth and professional achievement. He is the vice chairman/COO of Graham Theodor & Co., an investment holding company and he manages business development for ePACT Network, a technology startup. Connect with him on Twitter @IamGrahamYoung