

THE BENEFITS OF FAILURE

Have you ever been so afraid of failing at something that you decided not to try it at all? Or has the fear of failing meant that you undermined your own capabilities to avoid the prospect of a bigger failure?

If you have, then you're not on your own, many of us have experienced this at one time or another. The fear of failing has a disabling effect – paralyzing us from venturing forward and experiencing our potential. It is actually the fear of failure, not failure itself, that cripples us. The fear of failure has influenced and controlled people for generations, limiting and imprisoning them to a world of misleading thought.

Generations have been raised, influenced and cultured by the fear of failure. It needs to be addressed and looked at from a 'new perspective' asking ourselves questions such as:

- Is failure a bad thing?
- Where does the fear of failure originate in your life?
- Does God plan for us to fail along the journey?

Imagine for a moment if you could live life free from the condemning influence of the fear of failure. How would you live?

What is Failure?

Our definition of failure defines more about us than we may realize. Most view failure as doing something and expecting a certain result and when you don't get the result that you expected you define it as a failure. If the outcome of an action we take is not what we expected this doesn't mean we have failed.

Most people have a wrong idea of success and as a result quickly default to a 'failure mentality.' I believe we need a new perspective on success and failure.

Success is not so much the end result we achieve but rather the wisdom to grow through adverse circumstances and the courage to never give up. Or put another way, the ability to navigate accurately through an unexpected outcome.

Winston Churchill said this, "**Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.**"

You don't have to be perfect!

Most people have a 'Perfect Life Mentality.' Meaning that they are too scared to 'stuff up.' This can be linked to many causes. For instance, having critical or unsupportive parents is a cause for some people. Being routinely undermined or humiliated in childhood can be the cause of people fearing failure in adulthood. Experiencing a traumatic event at some point in your life can also be a cause.

God planned for you to experience failure

Having a healthy perspective is crucial to us journeying through life successfully. The problems we face and the way we deal with them is connected to perspective.

As a believer having a wrong perspective of God will effect the way we approach life and represent Him. A vast majority of believers have a measure of understanding about the nature of God but are limited in their understanding of God as 'their Father.' Therefore they relate to God as some distant entity that expects us to get it right at all times. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact the scriptures highlight the reality that God knows that we will experience failure at different stages in our journey.

Psalm 37:23-24 says, *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,^{SEP} And He delights in his way. **Though he fall**, he shall not be utterly cast down,^{SEP} For the Lord upholds him with His hand."*

Notice the statement, *"though he fall..."* In other words, along life's journey there will be times where you experience unexpected outcomes and struggle to get up and get going again. But scriptures declare that God has planned for those times and will stand with us providing the strength to overcome.

Failure is part of success

It's almost impossible to go through life without experiencing some kind of failure. People who do so probably live so cautiously that they go nowhere. Put simply, they're not really living at all.

The wonderful thing about failure is that it's entirely up to us to decide how to look at it.

We can choose to see failure as "the end of the world," or, we can look at failure as the incredible learning experience that it often is. Every time we fail at something, we can choose to look for the lesson we're meant to learn. These lessons are very important;

they're how we grow, and how we keep from making that same mistake again. Failures stop us only if we let them.

Realize that failure is part of the learning curve. Failure and mistakes aren't fun but they are what help us learn to be great at whatever it is we are trying to achieve.

"He who never makes mistakes, never makes anything," goes an English Proverb.

Signs of Fear of Failure

You might experience some of these symptoms if you have a fear of failure:

- A reluctance to try new things or get involved in challenging projects.
- Self-sabotage - for example, procrastination, excessive anxiety, or a failure to follow through with goals.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence – Commonly using negative statements such as "I'll never be good enough"
- Perfectionism – A willingness to try only those things that you know you'll finish perfectly and successfully.

"Failure" – A Matter of Perspective!

We must accept that at some point in our journey we will experience failure- the question is, what level of control will we allow failure to have over us?

A failure on one level is often a success on another. The Scottish pharmacologist Sir Alexander Fleming *succeeded* in accidentally discovering penicillin (which has indirectly saved hundreds of millions of lives) through *failing* to clear away cultures of staphylococci on a bench in a corner of his laboratory.

Everyone hates to fail but what most people don't realize is that failing is part of success. Anyone who has ever succeeded has failed many times. You cannot create a life of significance unless you are **willing to process failure.**

Look at each failure as a blessing in disguise. It is not through success that we become wise, but through our failures.

Peter Christensen