

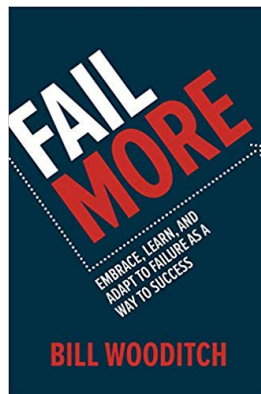
SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

TOPIC THIS ISSUE: EMBRACE FAILURE AS A WAY TO SUCCESS

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ACHIEVEMENT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF FAILURE

By: Bill Wooditch



At an early age, our teachers, parents, peers, and the rest of the social order teach us that failure is the result of a lack of innate ability. We're taught to compete for perfection—a zero-sum form of induced combat that pits our genes against the genes of others.

When it comes to obstacles that could result in potential failure, people adopt a cycle of avoidance. Avoidance is our natural inclination, followed by frustration, anger, excuses, and ultimately surrender. We carry the vestiges of this thinking into our businesses and homes. It becomes a part of our life, and we have one of two choices: deal with it and navigate

forward in spite of it, or succumb to it and say, "I quit."

To escape the regret of what-ifs, you must summon the courage to break the cycle of avoidance. When it comes to courage, Franklin D. Roosevelt's words resonate: ***"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear."***

The First Two Steps

And there it is! The first two steps to failing more productively are to **recognize the cycle of avoidance and then have the courage to break the pattern and make the changes vital to growth.**

The road to success isn't easy. If it were, we'd all be wildly successful. Herculean feats aren't required for sustained success. What is required is the persistence and willingness to do something every day that



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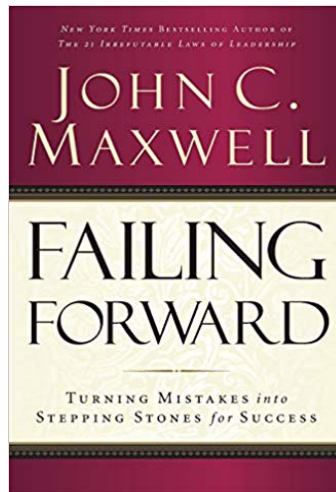
brings you closer to the realization of your dreams. Failure doesn't mean your efforts are over. It means they have just begun.

If you want to succeed, you have to fail more. The most significant difference between success and failure is the ability to learn from failure and apply the lessons to create success. Every failure comes with specific teachable moments, each of which deserves your undivided attention. If you don't heed those lessons, your failures are meaningless.

Failure can be a guide; it's a map that shows you where success lives. Think of life as an experimental lab—you are the innovator of your life, creating concepts that you can test in the field. Some of your ideas work and some won't, but each trial will give you a little more information, a little more encouragement, and a little more confidence. Each failed attempt will reveal what you have to do to make things work the next time. **There can be no success without failure.**

FAILING FORWARD

By: John C. Maxwell



“In life, the question is not if you will have problems, but how you are going to deal with your problems. If the possibility of failure were erased, what would you attempt to achieve?”

The essence of man is imperfection. Know that you're going to make mistakes. Wake up and realize this: **Failure is simply a price we pay to achieve success.** Achievers are given multiple reasons to believe they are failures. But in spite of that, they persevere. The average for entrepreneurs is **3.8 failures** before they finally make it in business. When

achievers fail, they see it as a momentary event, not a lifelong epidemic. Procrastination is too high a price to pay for fear of failure. To conquer fear, you have to feel the fear and take action anyway. Forget motivation. Just do it. Act your way into feeling, not wait for positive emotions to carry you forward.

Recognize that you will spend much of your life making mistakes. If you can take action and keep making mistakes, you gain experience.

Life is playing a poor hand well. **The greatest battle you wage**



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against failure occurs on the inside, not the outside. Why worry about things you can't control when you can keep yourself busy controlling the things that depend on you? Handicaps can only disable us if we let them. If you are continually experiencing trouble or facing obstacles, then you should check to make sure that you are not the problem.

Embrace adversity and make failure a regular part of your life. If you're not failing, you're probably not really moving forward. Everything in life brings risk. It's true that you risk failure if you try something bold because you might miss it. But you also risk failure if you stand still and don't try anything new. The less you venture out, the greater your risk of failure. Ironically, the more you risk failure — and actually fail — the greater your chances of success.

If you are succeeding in everything you do, then you're probably not pushing yourself hard enough. And that means you're not taking enough risks. You risk because you have something of value you want to achieve. The more you do, the more you fail. The more you fail, the more you learn. The more you learn, the better you get. Determining what went wrong in a situation has value. But taking that analysis another step and figuring out how to use it to your benefit is the real difference-maker when it comes to failing forward. Don't let your learning lead to knowledge; let your learning lead to action.

The last time you failed, did you stop trying because you failed, or did you fail because you stopped trying? Commitment makes you capable of failing forward until you reach your goals. Cutting corners is really a sign of impatience and poor self-discipline. Successful people have learned to do what does not come naturally. Nothing worth achieving comes easily. The only way to fail forward and achieve your dreams is to cultivate tenacity and persistence. Never say die. Never be satisfied. Be stubborn. Be persistent. Integrity is a must. Anything worth having is worth striving for with all your might.

If we look long enough for what we want in life, we are almost sure to find it. **Success is in the journey, the continual process.** And no matter how hard you work, you will not create the perfect plan or execute it without error. You will never get to the point that you no longer make mistakes, that you no longer fail.

The next time you find yourself envying what successful people have achieved, recognize that they have probably gone through many negative experiences that you cannot see on the surface.

“Fail early, fail often, but always fail forward.”
— **John Maxwell, Failing Forward**

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RECOGNIZING FEAR:

The Ultimate Dream Killer

By: Bill Wooditch

Fear kills more dreams than failure ever will.

Anything in life of merit or value comes at a cost, with a sacrifice, and often with the clear and present possibility of failure. Refusal to acknowledge or engage in those activities that include the potential of failure means you're playing it safe.

You play it safe because you fear. Fear can sabotage your career and marginalize your life. Your dreams and aspirations for a better life can only become your lived reality when you recognize that fear is the ultimate dream killer.

It is important to recognize that fear originates from two sources: an avoidance of loss or an aversion to change. Once you understand where your fears originate, you can then weigh the course of action necessary to achieve your goals.

Fear disguises itself as procrastination or distraction. You think to yourself, "I'm not ready. It's not the perfect time. I'm not good enough. I'll be better tomorrow." Most fail to recognize that it's irrational fear that holds them back in life. We tend to blame external obstacles for our internal unwillingness to put ourselves in play.

But how do you recognize that it's fear that's stopping you?

First, let's draw the distinction between fear and danger.

Distinguishing Between Fear and Danger

Your ability to distinguish between rational and irrational fear will provide a guide to understanding what can cause physical harm and what is a product of your overactive imagination.

Rational fear is the early warning system that alerts you to danger. Conversely, irrational fear is a product of your imagination. When you perceive a "threat" and project future harm, your body reacts in the same way as it does to real danger. This fight, flight, or freeze response is a product of your genetic imprint.

Today's sabertooth tiger of your imagination can be an angry client or spouse, or it might be a deadline you're running up against.

Fear holds us hostage in a cycle of adrenaline release. The more dangerous the perceived situation, the bigger the buildup and release of adrenaline. Unutilized adrenaline demands an outlet, and that unspent

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surge often results in anxiety and, left unchecked, the “black dog” of depression.

When we begin to fear, fear itself, the trickle of adrenaline is released from the imagined consequences of confrontation. We feel out of control and helpless and caught up in a web of fear and adrenaline. Hypothetical scenarios create panic, and panic perpetuates feelings of fear and the release of adrenaline. This cycle of adrenaline release resulting in fear is physically and mentally debilitating.

There is a way to stop the cycle. To do this, we need to understand the difference between being aware of fear and accepting it:

- **Be aware.** Become acquainted with the feeling. Fear is a feeling. It holds as much power over you as you permit. Be aware that what you’re feeling is human.
- **Accept it.** By accepting fear, you lessen its power. Expect it because it’s never going away; then embrace and welcome the feelings that accompany it. This sounds crazy, but when you welcome the inevitable, you steal its power. When you expect it, you’re prepared for it.

Make a pact with yourself: “I can live with this.” By making this statement, you take back your power—and you need this power to perform at your best.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

By: Bill Wooditch



Your road to success is a process and a journey, not a destination. You can’t pause along the road and hope improvement will ensue from a lack of activity—success is always under construction.

The author Stephen King’s road to success was anything but a straight line. As a matter of fact, his story is one of self-belief, perseverance, and talent. King wrote constantly and was rewarded with rejection slips after each submission to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Mystery Magazine*.

Over time, King started to make a game out of the rejection. Instead of throwing the slips out, he nailed them in a stack to his bedroom wall. Imagine going to sleep at night, looking at rejection, and waking up, only to face it the next day.



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The rejection slips continued piling up, and soon the nail wasn't big enough to hold all the letters. So he got a bigger spike and kept on writing. In a capsule, this is the essence of **Fail More**. Rejection will slap you in the face, not once, not twice, but so many times that you'll lose count. But like King, your purpose will compel you to keep going, adapt, and grow.

After myriad impersonal rejections, King found hope in the one personalized response he received after eight years of failed submissions. Even though his manuscript was rejected, he found hope in the unsigned message that read, **"Don't staple manuscripts, loose pages + paper clip = correct way to submit copy."** Although it was cold water to the face, King did find it useful. Often in the midst of failure, there is that ray of light that, however dimly, provides direction.

Even though the rejections kept coming, King was progressing, getting better and better. He was steadfast in his resolve to be published. His persistence would pay off again, when one of the magazines wrote back, **"Your stuff is good, but it's not for us: Keep submitting."**

King viewed rejection as a learning process, and he stayed with the process until he began learning, improving, and finally getting published.

Channeling Your Inner Stephen King

Your goal needs to be clear and present, focused to the extreme. You must never lose sight of it. King found his purpose early. He loved to write; he wanted to be published, and nothing would stop that from becoming a reality.

King engaged in that intentional practice that leads to mastery. Are you ready to enter the 10,000 hours+ of practice that mastery requires? There are no overnight successes. You've got to do the work.

Do you have what it takes to be rejection-proof? Do you understand that rejection is a prerequisite for success? Accept that immediately, and get used to it!

Self-doubt and lack of confidence will derail you. No one will believe in you unless you first believe in yourself. Grow your confidence with small steps, little things that give you the impetus to try more. Don't run from rejection; use it as fuel.

Surround yourself with people who offer moral and intellectual support and feedback. You need assistance to become successful in life; you can't do it all alone. King had a major advocate. His wife believed in him, supported him, and encouraged him to keep going when he thought **Carrie** was a failure—and we should all be thankful she did.

