The Importance of Failure: 5 Valuable Lessons from Failing

*“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 have failed by default.” — J.K. Rowling*

Why Failure is so Important

Failure, as much as it hurts, is an important part of life. In fact, failure is necessary.

I have failed more times than I’d like to admit. And I’m not talking about small failures; I’m talking about the kind of failures that rock your world, completely altering the landscape of your relationships, finances, and mental-wellbeing.

And, if you’re anything like me, then you’ve also most likely failed many times over. I can’t say that I particularly enjoy failing, but failure, through its life-altering lessons, makes us into better persons.

In fact, failure is life’s great teacher; it’s nature’s chisel that chips away at all the excess, stripping down egos as it molds and shapes us through divine intentions.

Without failure, we’d be less capable of compassion, empathy, kindness, and great achievement; we would be less likely to reach for the moon and the stars.

*It’s through failure that we learn the greatest lessons that life could teach us.*

What is Failure?

What is failure, really? Why is it so important to fail at something before we can succeed?

Not too long ago, I wrote an article about [12 Famous People Who Failed](https://www.wanderlustworker.com/12-famous-people-who-failed-before-succeeding/) and it really got me thinking about the nature of failure. What is it and how does it affect our lives? How does it affect our thoughts, emotions, and our actions?

When we think about failure, we think of things in a negative light. We say that failure is painful and that it causes emotional turmoil and upset, and inflicts agonizing pangs of guilt, regret, and remorse.

But, for those that have known true failure, and have bounced back from it, understand that failure in life is necessary for success. Sure, failing hurts. In fact, it cuts deep like a razor, slicing its way to our inner core. Yet, it’s necessary.

And the most successful people in life have failed the most times. If you try to go through life without failing at anything, then you’re not really living a life at all. Taking risks and falling down flat on our faces is part of life; it makes us into who we are.

When a baby is first learning to walk, she’s going to fall down many times. This, in fact, is failure. But, ask any mother about their baby’s ability to walk and she will wholeheartedly declare that her baby will one day walk. She might fall down many times, but she will surely walk.

Why is the mother so confident that her daughter will walk? Of course, we all know the answer to that. We know that falling down and failing while learning to walk is just a part of life. So, why isn’t failure at other things treated this way?

What we don’t realize as is just what some people had to go to in order to get where they are in life. Like the baby learning to walk, they had to fall down and fail many times.

The problem? Society tends to celebrate the successes rather than highlighting the epic journeys towards success that are filled with trials, tribulations, upsets, setbacks, and failures. It’s not as glamorous to talk about those things.

*“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” — Michael Jordan*

Why It’s Necessary to Fail

In life, it’s necessary to fail. Failure is a steppingstone. In fact, there are 5 very powerful life lessons that failure helps to teach and instill in us. If you’ve recently failed at something in a major way, and you’re going through a difficult time right now, keep these important lessons in mind.

Failure Lesson #1: Experience

The first important lesson gained from failure is experience.

What happens when we fail? When we go through something and can walk away with firsthand experience, it helps us to develop a deeper understanding for life.

The experience of failing at something is truly invaluable. It completely alters our frame-of-mind through the induction of pain. It makes us reflect on the real nature of things and their importance in our lives, transforming and improving our future-selves.

Lesson #2: Knowledge

Failure brings with it important firsthand knowledge. That knowledge can be harnessed in the future to overcome that very failure that inflicted so much pain in the first place. Nothing can replace the knowledge gained from failure.

When Benjamin Franklin famously failed nearly 10,000 times to create a commercially viable electric lightbulb, with each failure, he gained the knowledge of just one more avenue that didn’t work. It was the accumulated knowledge developed from nearly 10,000 failed attempts that ultimately led to his success.

Lesson #3: Resilience

Failing in life helps to build resilience. The more we fail, the more resilient we become.

In order to achieve great success, we must know resilience. Because, if we think that we’re going to succeed on the first try, or even the first few tries, then we’re sure to set ourselves up for a far more painful failure.

The characteristic of resilience can help us in so many ways in life. Resilience helps to breed success by setting the game up to win. Gone are the lofty expectations that thing will happen overnight, and in comes the expectations that true success will take an enormous amount of work and effort.

Lesson #4: Growth

When we fail, we grow and mature as human beings. We reach deeper meanings and understandings about our lives and why we’re doing the things that we’re doing. This helps us to reflect and take things into perspective, developing meaning from painful situations.

Life is designed for us to grow and improve. From the very genetic fibers that make us into who we are as individual persons, into the fabric of society on a global scale, growth is a fundamental part of us. Without growth, we couldn’t improve life on every front.

Lesson #5: Value

One of the biggest lessons that we can learn from life’s failures is the necessity to create and spread an exceedingly high amount of value. In fact, value lies at the heart of success and a lack of value is a fundamental pillar to failure.

In thinking about your past failures, think about how much value you brought to the table. Could you have offered more value? Would that have prevented failure? When you learn to create immense value, and do so consistently, you will eventually succeed.

How to Recover from Failure

There are many ways to recover from failure. Once you understand what failure is, and how it’s meant to serve us rather than hinder us, you’ll free your mind and open your heart to experience the joy of failure.

Joy? Yes – Joy.

When we’re going through failure, it’s hard to recognize the importance of it. We can’t see the forest through the trees, so to speak, when there’s a fire threatening to burn the whole village down. But, that’s just what we have to do.

So, if you’ve failed in life, hopefully you better understand the importance of failing and failing often. But, how do you recover from failure? There are a few ways to do this.

#1 – Ignore the Naysayers

When you fail, surely there will be the people telling you, “I told you so,” and, “You should have listened to me.”

*Ignore those people. Ignore the naysayers.*

Living a life that’s completely safe all the time, isn’t really living. If you watched J.K. Rowling’s Harvard commencement speech, then surely you walked away with a better understanding of this.

#2 – Understand that it’s Okay to Fail

One of the best ways to recover from failure is to understand that it’s quite alright to fail. If you were to conduct any one of a number of searches on the Web, you would find countless stories about failure from the world’s most successful people.

*It’s okay to fail. But it’s not okay to give up.*

Even if you failed and that failure was extremely painful, it’s not okay to give up. Keep failing over and over again if you have to. Keep on doing it until you succeed. Success will taste so much sweeter when you reach it.

Pushing forward and not giving up is quite possibly one of the best ways to recover from failure. Remember, it’s not true failure unless you throw in that proverbial towel and wholeheartedly give up forever.

#3 – Realize that it’s Okay to Fail

Although failure to us symbolizes pain, and we’ll do more to avoid pain than we will to gain pleasure, we have to realize that it’s okay to fail. When we realize the importance that failure has played in the lives of the most successful people, it’s far easier to reach this understanding.

Failure will take you on a journey that you might not want to go on. But, the reality of the situation is that those journeys will help to mold and shape you into a better person.

Recovering from failure becomes far more effortless with the knowledge and experience of that failure under our belts. And there’s simply no way forward in life without failure.

#4 – Using Failure as Leverage

If you’ve failed in life, you can use that as leverage to not only recover from it, but to help propel you forward in the future. Failure can be a great a platform for growth that is simply unmatched.

To leverage your failures, you have to illuminate them to your mind. Write out what you failed at and why you failed. Did you have deep enough meaning to your goals in the past? What could you have done differently?

How will you tackle those failures in the future when you’re faced with them? How will you learn from the past to help shape a bigger and brighter future?

Failure isn’t the end of the road as long as you don’t give up. If you still believe in your goals, you can use the failure as leverage to push past the old limitations of your past.

#5 – Revisit Your Goals

Did you have clear and concrete goals in the past? Did you [set goals the SMARTER way](https://www.wanderlustworker.com/setting-s-m-a-r-t-e-r-goals-7-steps-to-achieving-any-goal/)? Revisit your goals from the past and look at just how clear you were with your goals. Were they precise and exact? Did you visualize them in your mind?

Sometimes, failure results from not setting goals the right way. Not only must we set goals the right way, but we must track and analyze them on a monthly, weekly, and [daily](https://www.wanderlustworker.com/daily-goal-setting-how-to-set-yourself-up-for-success/) basis.

To recover from failure, revisit your goals and redefine them. Spend the time necessary to analyze and adjust where necessary.

#6 – Create a Massive Action Plan

Want to recover from failure? Create a Massive Action Plan. Take your goals and lay out a plan as to how you’re going to achieve them. What will you do in the face of failure next time it rears its ugly head?

When we have a massive action plan, we have a systematic way of achieving the goals that we set for ourselves. Once we come to the realization that those goals won’t be simple to achieve, we can approach things with a more long-term frame-of-mind.

Set out a solid action plan that will help you push past the stumbling blocks of life, and watch as you slowly but surely recover from any setbacks, upsets, or failures.

<https://www.wanderlustworker.com/the-importance-of-failure-5-valuable-lessons-from-failing/>

What has been your greatest moment of failure so far? (that you feel comfortable sharing with me)

Which steps did you take the steps above to learn from it?

What did you learn?