

Handling Failure

How Do You Handle Failure?

No one's life is an unbroken chain of victories. We all experience setbacks defeats losses failures. Nobody bats 1000%. We all make mistakes.

Since failure is common to all of us, one of the most important life-skills you can learn is how to respond to it. Successful people know how to turn every failure into a learning experience - a stepping-stone to future success.

Five Common Causes of Failure

When we don't plan ahead.

As the old saying goes, "If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail."

Proverbs 27:12 *A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them.*

Remember, Noah had to start building the Ark long before it started raining!

When we think we've "arrived."

Remember the lesson of the whale: Just when you get to the top, and you start to blow - that's when you get harpooned!

Proverbs 18:18 *Pride leads to destruction and arrogance leads to downfall.*
In other words, the man who gets to big for his britches will be exposed in the end.

When we are afraid to take necessary risks.

The fear of failure can cause failure. We worry about what others will think of us if we fail so we don't even try. Fran Tarkenton says, "Fear sets you up to be a loser." We fail to take advantage of golden opportunities.

Proverbs 29:25 *The fear of man is a dangerous trap.*

When we give up too soon.

Many times, success is just around the corner. Remember, the game is often won in the final seconds. If at first you don't succeed- you're normal! Keep on keeping on! The value of a postage stamp is found in its ability to stick to one thing until it gets there.

Proverbs 15:19 *A lazy fellow had trouble all through life.*

When we ignore God's advice.

The Bible is our owner's manual for life. It is filled with practical instructions and guidelines for work, home, finances, relationships, and health. When we fail to follow these, we're asking for trouble.

Proverbs 14:12 *There is a way that SEEMS right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.*

How Do You Start Over Once You've Failed?

1. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN FAILURE.

If you've made a mistake - admit it! Welcome to the human race. Don't blame others. To blame is to "b-lame." Losers love to blame bad luck the economy the boss their spouse or even God for misfortune. But winners never accuse others and never excuse themselves when they fail. In 1974, after an 88 game winning streak, UCLA basketball lost to Notre Dame in a game they had led by 11 points. The next day's headline read, "Coach Wooden says 'Blame me!'" Wooden was a winner.

Proverbs 28:13 (LB) *Anyone who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance.*

2. RECOGNIZE THE BENEFITS OF FAILURE.

For instance...

It shows you what doesn't work. Thomas Edison said, "Don't call it a failure. Call it an education!"

It forces you to be more creative. You look for new ways.

It prevents arrogance and egotism. If everything you did was a stunning success, no one could live with you!

It causes you to reevaluate what's important in life. Failure is one way God gets us to reflect on the direction of our lives.

Proverbs 20:30 (GN) *Sometimes it takes a painful situation to make us change our ways.*

3. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM TO UNDERSTAND THE CAUSE.

Why did I fail? Is there any reason I might have set myself up to fail? There are many unconscious reasons we sometimes sabotage our own efforts:

The fear of success: Success may mean handling more responsibility than I want to carry.

Guilt: If you feel you don't deserve to succeed, you may have set yourself up to fail.

Resentment: Some people fail as a way of getting even with those who are pressuring them to succeed.

James 1:5 *If you lack wisdom, ask God, who gives generously to all...*

4. FORGET THE PAST AND FOCUS ON THE FUTURE.

Your past is past! It's water under the bridge. You can't change it so you may as well stop worrying about it.

Philippians 4:1 *Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on...*