

7 POWERFUL WAYS TO BOUNCE BACK FROM FAILURE



"Winners are not afraid of losing. But losers are. Failure is part of the process of success. People who avoid failure also avoid success."

– Robert T. Kiyosaki

Introduction

Failure comes in many shapes and forms. It could be failing an exam, losing your business, not getting the promotion you were expecting or a painful marital breakup.

Failure is also relative. For one person, a stern reprimand from the boss is an embarrassing failure while for another, it's just an embarrassment.

In the first instance, the person would squirm with shame and frustration for days, reliving the moment over and over. The second person quickly races to fix the mistake and regain the boss's approval.

Whereas one person sees losing their job as failure, another sees it as a setback. It depends on the individual's personal "failure scale".

In an ideal world, everyone would never use the word "failure" but instead, think "obstacle" or "setback." But realistically, that doesn't happen.

Anyone who tells you they haven't experienced failure is lying to your face. Like death and taxes, failure is an inevitable part of life. And it doesn't happen once. We're likely to experience many failures of varying magnitude throughout our lifetime. It's always painful, shameful, frustrating and sometimes, it can be devastating.

Some interesting facts about failure

Several research studies have been done on failure and its effect on individuals. Some of the findings include:

- Failure decreases a person's confidence in their skills and abilities. They equate failure to inferiority.

- Failure makes the goal appear unattainable. This is the reason why many people change track midway or just give up. They believe that since they failed once, they will continue to fail.
- An extreme and irrational fear of failure can be caused by just one failure or setback.
- Failure makes people helpless. Some people become so overwhelmed with despair that they literally feel their lives have come to an end.
- Failure causes emotional and mental pain

Don't despair - these are the negative findings. On the positive side, research has also shown that those who are hungry for success and willing to go the extra mile always bounce back from failure more quickly and spectacularly. This is what this book is all about.

Why do we take failure so hard? One reason is because we take it so personally! Have you ever known anyone who intentionally set themselves up to fail? Yes, failure happens and it could be our fault but never our fault by intention.

The key to bouncing back from failure is not to take it personally. You need to learn to look at failure objectively in order to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and put it behind you.

There are 7 powerful ways to develop that neutral, objective mindset to be able to honestly assess failure, learn the lessons you need to and move on to bigger and better successes.

Is that all it takes? Yes! You're just 7 steps away from developing amazing resilience and grit in the face of any failure!

Approach Vs. Avoidant Mentality - Which One Are You?

No two failures or setbacks are exactly the same nor are any two reactions to failure exactly alike. The way individuals deal with failure is a uniquely personalized experience. Their perception depends upon their character, their circumstances and the type and scope of the failure.

For some, losing their job can be like a devastating hurricane that totally crushes them. For others, it's like a tornado that does

some minor damage. Others see it like a thunderstorm that will temporarily derail them. Still, failure isn't fun and nobody takes it lightly.

Understanding how you perceive and deal with failure is the first step to bouncing back more effectively. There are two basic mindsets that govern how we relate to failing; approach or avoidant. Read on to identify whether you have an approach mentality or an avoidant mentality.

The approach mentality

People with an approach mindset understand that failure is a natural part of the landscape. They know that despite their best efforts, failure and setbacks are a possibility.

This type of person is mentally prepared. In the event that failure is in the cards, they're not completely knocked off their feet if it happens. Some people actually create a physical "plan B" for how they'll proceed in the face of a failure or setbacks. This could be anything from a small emergency fund to a complete reshuffling of their business structure.

Needless to say, this type of mindset makes it easier to pick yourself up and bounce back. That's not to say that the 7 steps discussed here become irrelevant. As you will see, you still need them to make a more effective and successful comeback.

In essence, an approach mentality means forewarned is forearmed and as a result, you will avoid a lot of mental anguish and heartache.

The avoidant mentality

A person with this mindset avoids preparing mentally for failure. He avoids acknowledging that it's a possibility. He sees only the shining success ahead of him and makes that his sole purpose and focus. There's another good word for this mentality: denial!

This is a great motivational mindset to have but it doesn't hold up very well in the face of failure. Failing or experiencing a setback tend to be more devastating for someone with this mentality.

In essence, an avoidant mindset can be defined as being intentionally blind to the possibility of failure.

What type of mentality do you have regarding failure? If it's the first, then you're in a good place. If it's the second, you need to work on being more mentally prepared.

When embarking on a new goal or project, simply take the time to assess the things that could go wrong, and how you would tackle these issues. Ask yourself a lot of "if" questions; "If this happened, I would do this... If this went wrong, I would need to... If I fail, it would mean..."

Remind yourself that unexpected situations may arise that simply weren't on your radar and if they do, you will deal with them as best you can.

Developing an approach mental requires no specific skills or talents. It needs nothing more than practice. Always teach yourself to think in this way until it becomes a habit. This will put you in a much better place in the event that you fail.

7 Powerful Ways To Bounce Back

Now, let's jump right into the meat and potatoes. Bouncing back from failure and making a spectacular comeback is your only

option. You can't turn back time to go back and do everything over again. You can't curl up and die (although you may feel like you want to)!

There's only one way open to you - the way forward. So, make sure you do that with a comeback that's nothing less than brilliant. The following 7 steps will help you through the process.

1. Face your fear of failure

Everyone fears failure. More precisely, it terrifies us. This is because the word has so many negative connotations: loser, stupid, negligent, inferior, poor performer, not having what it takes... the list is endless.

Confront your fear of failure by reflecting on the following:

- **It's always temporary**

Failure doesn't last forever. Life goes on and ultimately, it becomes forgotten - by you and everyone else. Really digesting this can be very powerful in cutting your fear by half or even more.

When we know that something we fear is temporary, we don't fear it as much. Drill that thought into your brain. It's an instant fear of failure-buster.

- **Don't cling to perfection**

Sometimes, it's not really failure we fear but the thought of doing something less than perfect, or achieving a less than perfect result. But a less than perfect outcome may be perfectly adequate (pun not intended)., Even a mediocre outcome does not mean you've failed.

Making the distinction between imperfection and failure can be the key to dispelling your fear. And remember, perfection is not always attainable, if at all.

- **Failure helps you grow**

Failing teaches you invaluable lessons that nothing else can. Have you ever looked at it that way? That's not to say you should welcome failure. But when you see it as a challenge, a life lesson that will help you grow, you certainly can't fear it as much.

● **Embrace your successes**

We all have our brilliant successes that make us glow with pride. We all have our unique talents and skills that make us feel good about ourselves.

Confront your fear of failure with all of your achievements and know that you will continue to make great decisions and have outstanding successes, despite any setbacks along the way.

2. Do failure analysis

Painful as it may be, you need to go back and try to identify what went wrong. This is a key step that will help you avoid making the same mistakes next time.

Sometimes, it's not possible to pinpoint a single cause or factor. However, reliving and assessing the experience will give you a general sense of when things began to go downhill. This is another key way to be aware of these warning signs in the future.

Failure analysis is a process usually applied to business projects and management but its basic framework can be used to assess any type of setback.

You can apply it by going through the following questions:

- **Assess your skills and expertise:**

Was the failure due to a certain skill or expertise that you lacked? If so, then you would want to consider honing up that skill or expanding your scope of expertise.

- **Was there an alternative**

What could have been done differently? What alternative decision or action could have led to a successful outcome? Was this alternative considered?

- **Was there a breakdown in communication**

This is a common issue that can lead to bad outcomes. If you identify this as the cause, analyze it further to pinpoint what was not communicated well and by whom.

- **What was the biggest factor that contributed to your failed outcome?**

If you have identified several factors, narrow them down to the one single factor that if avoided, could have led to a better outcome.

- **Was there an unexpected factor that led to the failure?**

Was it really unexpected or could it have been planned for?

- **What was your fault?**

If it was a group effort, how did you personally contribute to the failed outcome?

Unless we learn to analyze our failures, we will never learn from them. That's a shame because failure can be an amazing opportunity for growth and advancement.

3. Be tough and transparent - with yourself

A big part of bouncing back from failure involves owning up and taking responsibility for your actions. Playing the victim game and throwing blame might make you feel better but subconsciously, you're giving yourself license to fail again - because it's never your fault!

When you're brutally honest with yourself, you'll identify faults that may make you squirm with embarrassment and shame but they will give you the harsh awakening that you need.

You didn't make it through the job interview not because the interviewer was mean and just didn't like you. Is that really true? With honest self-reflection you'll identify the real reason. It could be that you didn't make eye contact. Maybe you were too flippant and overconfident. Maybe you didn't really listen to the questions he was asking – or worse, lied, and he saw through it. Perhaps your body language was sending the wrong messages...

You lost that important client because your team just wasn't the right fit, right? Wrong. It was because you were turning in your work late, not asking questions or not coordinating with your colleagues.

You played a part in it, even if others were guilty as well.

You failed your exam because it was above genius level, right? Wrong again. It was because you weren't well prepared. You know you should've spent less time gaming and chatting on Facebook and more time studying.

Always be brutally honest and give yourself some tough love. It's very rare that you will not have some responsibility for a failure, no matter how small - own up to it and your comeback will be much smoother.

4. Learn to reframe failure

Reframing failure means putting it into a more positive perspective, or seeing the good in the bad. It's developing a mindset that allows you to better succeed the next time around. This involves 3 core steps.

- **See the big picture**

When you think of life as a marathon rather than a sprint, you can minimize and reframe failure. If you're running a marathon,

can you afford to burn out and declare defeat every time you stumble and fall? Just as there will be failures along the way, there will be successes.

When you see the bigger picture, you'll realize there's still a long way to go. Your goal is to reach the finish line and not give up halfway. Now, that would indeed be a failure!

- **Get comfortable with uncertainty**

The best-laid plans do not guarantee a successful outcome. There's a degree of uncertainty in everything we undertake. Yes, you may have been responsible for failing but you certainly didn't do it on purpose. You did your best to succeed - in fact, you were pretty sure you would - but you didn't leave room for the slight possibility that you wouldn't.

Always realize that the element of uncertainty is out of your control. Some people actually embrace it and consider it a challenge that they will confront head-on and overcome. That's a brilliant way to look at the possibility of failure.

Factor in the element of uncertainty to become mentally tough. Always do the very best you can but keep in mind nothing is certain.

- **Cut the critical self-talk**

Owning up is important but endlessly beating yourself up about it does nothing but make you feel worse.

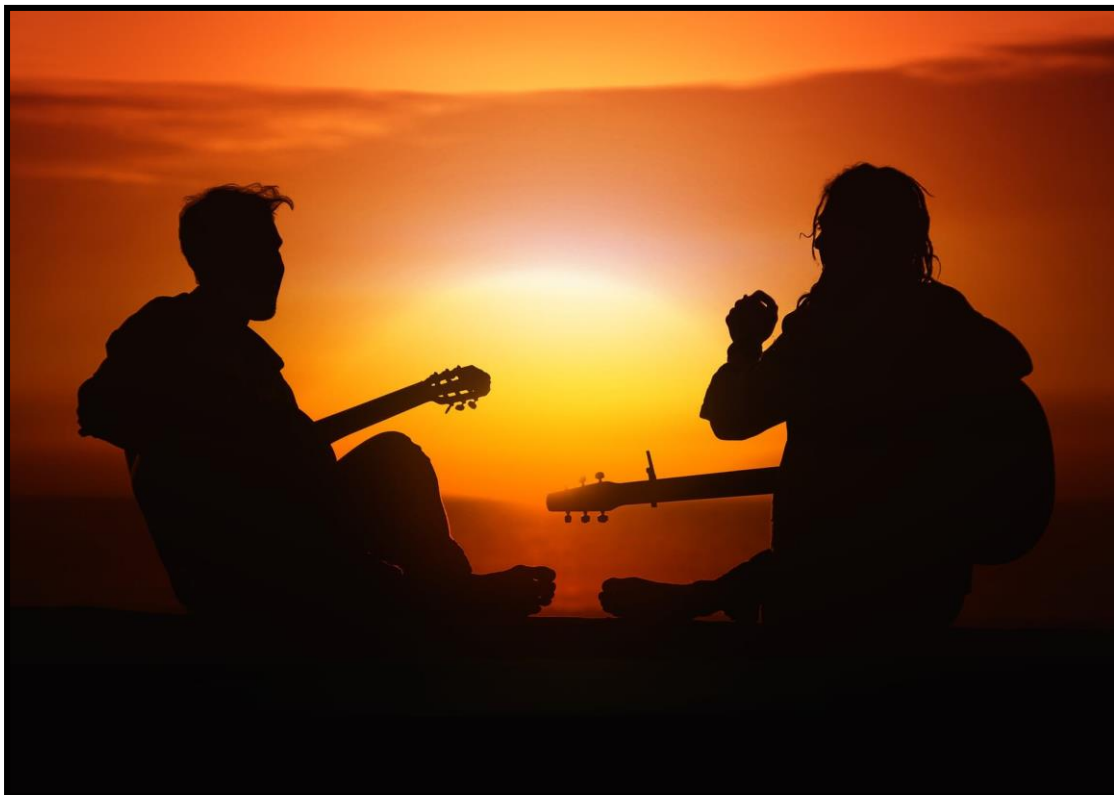
The negative self-talk in your head after a setback can be crippling. "you're such a loser... you blew it, you idiot! How could I be so stupid? Why didn't I see it coming? I'm such a failure" We've all heard that voice in our head that eats away at our self-worth and our sanity. Never let it control you.

Train yourself to eliminate the judgmental self-talk by being on the alert for those thoughts. Dismiss them immediately and instead, firmly tell yourself, what happened has happened. I did my best. I take responsibility. It's time to move on.

5. Celebrate the positives

Failure isn't always a dismal quagmire of shame, misery and regret. You can be certain that even the worst setbacks have their glimmers of sunshine.

Look for the positives in your failure and you will achieve two things. First, you will realize that you didn't do so bad, all things considered. Second, you'll banish the critical self-talk that's bombarding you with self-doubt and recrimination.



Reflect on the following questions:

- What's the one thing you did that you would definitely do again?
- What are three positive things you did that deserve a pat on the back?
- What's one thing you did that you would consider outstanding?
- What was one high point of this endeavor?
- What can you be grateful for despite everything?
- What personal skill served you well despite the setback?
- How will you come out of this a stronger person?
- How will you come out of this a better person?

Reflecting on these questions will make your healing process faster and give your self-confidence a powerful boost.

6. Remember your "why"

This step is similar to seeing life as a marathon except here, you focus on your big goal, or your life purpose. It's why you do what you do.

Within. that bigger life goal is a series of smaller goals that will help you reach it. These smaller goals could be getting a certain degree, becoming financially secure or advancing to a certain level in your career.

Typically, most failures occur in the realm of these smaller goals. Therefore, a setback may derail you for a while but it doesn't mean everything's lost.

It's always important to keep your "why" in mind but even more so when you fail. Here are some ways you can do that:

- Part of your "why" may include the people you care about, your partner, children, parents and friends. They are the reason you need to pick yourself and bounce back, especially if they've been affected by the setback.
- Determine how your why has been affected and what you need to do to get back on track.
- Reorganize your commitments and priorities to bring your "why" back into focus
- Assess how you need to reorganize your life and time to steer yourself back towards your purpose.
- Remind yourself that your "why" is worth fighting for.

In rare cases, failure can bring an unfortunate realization that you need to find a new "why". This is especially true when you experience repeated failure. Maybe you're just not destined to become an actor. Or, despite all your efforts, you're not going anywhere in your career of choice. It may be that a relationship you've planned your future around is not happily ever after.

It's important to pursue your dreams and passions but it's equally important to acknowledge when you're on the wrong journey.

If repeated failures continue to derail you, do some honest soul-searching and change course if you need to. It's not the end of the world. Everyone has a "why" and you will find the right one for you.

7. Forgive yourself

It's important to acknowledge failure and understand that it's part of the process. It's important to take responsibility, identify the lessons learned, reframe the failure and focus on your "why". After you've done all that, the final step is to forgive yourself.

Why it's important to forgive yourself

- Allowing guilt and remorse to fester inside of you is a bad coping strategy.

It just holds you back from moving forward and drags you into a loop of negativity. Putting these feelings behind you is a necessary part of the healing process.

- Forgiving yourself and moving forward with full force not only changes your outlook but the outlook of those around you who may have been affected by the setback. They will also forgive you and support you in getting back on your feet.
- The fact that you already feel guilty and remorseful means that you have acknowledged and learned a valuable lesson. Prolonging the torture is pointless.

The next step is not to stew in those feelings but to put the lessons you have learned into action.

Forgiving yourself can be done through the following steps:

- **Never compare yourself to others**

Don't look at others who you may perceive as "more successful" or "smarter" and wish you could be more like them.

The comparison game is bad any day, even more so when you're recovering from a setback. You are who you are and feeling inferior will only increase your fear of failure.

- **Apologize to yourself**

Not just mentally, but out loud. Tell yourself that you're sorry for messing up and that you will use the experience to bounce back stronger than ever.

Better yet, write a letter of apology to yourself where you can let your emotions flow. This is an excellent healing strategy.

- **Apologize to others.**

This is an important part of taking responsibility. Apologize to anyone you need to and perhaps discuss how you can make amends.

- **Be patient**

Healing takes time. The memory of failure won't go away overnight. But when you put your energy into bouncing back, the negative memories will be forgotten completely. The day will come when you can even look back and laugh at them.

There you have it! The 7 steps discussed above work together to create a powerful mindset that will help you overcome failure faster and more effectively. Everybody fails. It's the way they handle failure that separates the winners from the losers.

Simple tips for dealing with failure

Here are some additional tips to consider as you are applying the 7 steps:

- **Let your emotions flow**

In the beginning, failure is accompanied by a variety of strong emotions; anger, guilt, confusion, anxiety and remorse are a few of them. It's important not to deny these emotions but to let them out, and even to express them freely to trusted people. This is like a grieving process.

You need to give vent to all of these strong feelings in order to start healing. Don't carry them along with you on your comeback journey.

- **Take some time out.**

Consider going on a short holiday to calm down and reorganize your thoughts. A few days of quiet relaxation are the best way to put things into perspective.

- **Don't react with unhealthy behavior**

Violent outbursts, drinking or other impulsive reactions will not make the problem go away. They will make you appear irresponsible and irrational. Calm courage and responsible behavior in times of failure should be your only option.

- **Seek support**

This is the time to rally trusted friends, family and supportive people around you. Trying to get through failure alone is a lonely and painful process.

Open up and allow your support group to help you through it. This is a time when you need sympathy, encouragement and understanding more than ever.

● **Seek spiritual strength**

Inner strength is a powerful armor against failure. If you're religious, seek solace in prayer and closeness to God. If you're not, there are dozens of ways to find spiritual strength and comfort. Meditation, yoga, affirmations and communing with nature are some activities to give you inner peace and fortitude. More importantly, they will foster acceptance and help you to move on.

● **Sleep**

Failure can lead to restless nights of worry and anxiety. Sleep deprivation can rob you of the clarity and focus needed to plan for a successful comeback.

If you find that your sleep has been affected, take measures that will foster quality sleep. A warm bath or relaxing pre-bedtime activity, or even a sleep app will help you get the quality rest you need.

- **Manage your stress**

Stress can also cause sleeplessness as well as affect you physically. Be sure you manage your stress during this time so that you stay focused and healthy.

De-stress for a short time daily by exercising, going for a nature walk or engaging in a relaxing activity you enjoy.

- **Declutter your life**

Bouncing back requires your full concentration.

Do what you need to do to limit distractions that could delay or sidetrack you from creating a comeback strategy. This could mean decreasing social engagements, or disengaging from technology a bit more or delegating some tasks.

It's not forever, just long enough to keep your life as decluttered as possible while you put yourself back on track.

- **Practice gratitude.**

Although it may feel like your life has been turned upside down, all is not lost. You can always find something to be grateful for.

Your family, your health, supportive friends, even a good skill set that will enable you to start over.

You may find it helpful during this time to keep a gratitude journal and record 2-3 things you are grateful for every day.

Gratitude is a powerful way to foster hope and optimism, two important allies for bouncing back from failure.

- **Take the perspective test**

How much will this setback matter in 1 month/ 6 months/ 1 year? How much will it impact your life on a scale of 1-10? Sometimes, you may find that you are overreacting.

If the setback will not impact greatly, so much the better. Start fixing things right away and move on. If the impact is on a more serious scale, this test will also help you plan more carefully how you will move forward and minimize your losses.

- **Inspire yourself.**

Some of the greatest names in history experienced huge failures before achieving brilliant success. Albert Einstein, Walt Disney and Henry Ford are just a few names on the list.

Inspire yourself by reading some amazing success stories. Learn how amazingly successful people learned to pick themselves up after each fall and stay driven.

For example, Henry Ford went bankrupt 5 times before achieving his dream of making a mass-produced car.

Conclusion

Failure can knock us off our feet because it has so many negative associations. But staying down and accepting defeat is not an option you should even consider.

You can bounce back or even change course completely to achieve outstanding success.

Bouncing back from failure can be easily managed with a set of healthy coping skills. When you practice these 7 powerful steps, you will develop the ultimate coping mindset.

Develop an acceptance mentality and use the 7 steps to assess and reframe your failure. Create a plan for moving forward because remember it's the only way you can go!

Your plan should be based on the assessment of the last setback with all its positives and negatives. Be very clear on what you need to do and what you need to avoid this time around.

Remember, failure is a normal part of life. But you can always stay one step ahead by being mentally tough and ready to confront any failure with dignity courage and defiance.

Best of luck with your spectacular comeback!

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