

Hope: When You Feel Like a Failure

"The increase of suicides, alcoholics, and even some forms of nervous breakdowns is evidence that many people are training for success when they should be training for failure. Failure is far more common than success: poverty is more prevalent than wealth; and disappointment more normal than arrival." J. Wallace Hamilton

3 Facts About Failure

1. Everyone fails.

"if at first you don't succeed, you are running about average." M.H. Alderson

2. Nobody enjoys failure.

"Failure has no friends." John E Kennedy

"if at first you don't succeed, destroy all the evidence that you tried."

3. Anybody can learn how to fail forward.

Cardinal rule of human behaviour: sooner or later we all get just what we expect.

4. One non-fact about failure: NOT everybody is going to profit from their failure.

Key maxim: The major difference between average people and achieving people is their perception of failure and their response to failure. Charles Schultz

"if you want to impress people, talk to them about your success, if you want to impact people talk to them about your failures."

"Many people dream of success. To me, success can be achieved only through repeated failure and introspection. In fact, success represents only 1 percent of your work that results from 90 percent of that which is called failure. Very few unacquainted with failure will know the joy of true success."

Soichiro Honda, founder of Honda Motors

Biblical case study: Paul

- i. **Persistent Opposition and Persecution** (2 Cor 11:23-28)
- ii. **Conflict within the Early Church** (1 Cor; Galatians)
- iii. **Personal Weakness and Sin** (1 Tim 1:13-15)
- iv. **Unrealized Goals and Unmet Expectations:** (Rom 15)
- v. **Rejection of His Message** (Acts 17:32)

How could Paul overcome his past failures?

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

1. Paul realized that God was the source of his strength.
"Anything done in our own strength will either fail miserably or succeed even more miserably." G.K. Chesterton
2. Paul refused to allow difficulties on the outside get to him on the inside.
"*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.*"
3. Paul could continue without understanding everything.
... *perplexed, but not despairing.*
"God is too good to be unkind, He is too wise to be confused,
If I cannot trace His hand, I can always trust His heart." *Spurgeon*
4. Paul knew that God was with him during the tough times.
... *persecuted, but not forsaken.*"
5. Paul didn't allow the event to overshadow the process.
... *struck down, but not destroyed.*"

How can we handle setbacks and failures?

Commit yourself to a lifetime process of learning and growth

Read Philippians 3:13-14; Luke 9:62

So how do we deal with past failures?

Firstly, recognize it for what it is - the *past*.

Secondly, recognize it as one of Satan's greatest strategies.

Thirdly, change your attitude.

Losers dwell on the penalties of failure – they look back. Winners dwell on the rewards of failure – they look ahead

Determine the WHY of failure, not the WHO. (Biehl) Ask:

What lessons have I learned? Am I grateful for this experience? How can I turn this failure into success? Where do I go from here? Who else has "failed" before - how can they help me? How can my experience help others someday to keep from failing? Did I fail because of another person, because of my situation, or because of myself? Did I actually fail, or did I simply fall short of unrealistically high standards? Where did I succeed as well as "fail"?