

# Learn To Accept and Then Conquer Your Fear Of Failure

By Arthur Gueli

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The first time you tried to walk, you fell down. If you're like me, the first time you tried to swim, you almost drowned. You've already failed many times, although you may not remember.

Did you hit a baseball the first time you swung the bat? The best baseball players, the ones with .300 averages, fail 70 percent of the time.

Every baseball fan knows that Babe Ruth hit 714 home runs, but they probably won't be able to tell you that he struck out 1,330 times. R.H. Macy failed in seven different business endeavors before his store in New York caught on. English novelist John Creasy got 753 rejection slips before he published his 564 books.

The next time you feel like quitting, remember this story:

At age 22 he failed in business;  
at age 23 he ran for state legislature and lost;  
at age 24 he failed in business again;  
at age 26 his sweetheart died and he was broken-hearted;  
at age 27 he had a nervous breakdown;  
he eventually regained his health, running for Congress at age 34, and was defeated;  
at age 39 he ran for Congress again, and lost again;  
at age 46 he ran for senate and lost;  
his ticket lost when he ran for Vice President at age 47;  
at age 49 he ran for Senate again, and was defeated;  
at age 51 he ran and was elected to the office of President of the United States.  
His name was Abraham Lincoln.

Make up your mind that if you try anything worthwhile, you will fail at it first. Learn something, and try again. Jonas Salk worked for fifteen years before he found the vaccine for polio. That was fifteen years of continuous failure for one success. But look at the benefit to mankind.

I suggest we revise one old adage to: "If something is worth doing, it's worth doing badly." Anything you can do well the first time you try it is too simple to be of any consequence.

Several years ago, Columbia University was revising a part of the curriculum for their graduate business school and asked dozens of successful businessmen what the most important ingredient for success was. The answer wasn't charisma, education, money, salesmanship, or leadership qualities. It was persistence.

Learning to be a parent is learning from mistakes, not from success. You don't learn much when you're successful, but you certainly learn when you do something wrong. If you, as parents, start out ready to make mistakes (but learning from them), kids can learn with you. They too will learn from your mistakes.

Success and failure have the same root--the desire to achieve--but avoiding failure is not the same as achieving success. Failure is determined by what you allow to happen, success by what you make happen.

It is extremely important to emphasize the concept of failure as a positive experience. The only time failure becomes negative is when you stop the effort after the failure. When you give up. There's only one thing worse--not trying in the first place. So don't worry about failure. Worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try.

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