



Inspiring Futures
Teaching Excellence, Shaping Character

For all students to achieve academic excellence and realize potential in a progressive educational environment.

To equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to have success at University, and to lead meaningful, fulfilling lives as compassionate and contributing citizens

May 10, 2011 - Message from the Head of School



Failure & Mistakes --- Friends to Learning.

The positive impact of failure and mistakes in the learning process.

“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

We need to change the perception of failure. Failing experiences often have a positive effect on overall growth and development. Unfortunately, due to the flawed perception that failure is directly linked to decreased self-esteem, it is slowly being removed from the learning process. In fact the opposite is true, carefully crafted (and managed) opportunities for failure can grow self-esteem and increase development.

Being wrong is a crucial, unavoidable aspect of the learning process.

An environment where there are opportunities to fail and “be wrong” contribute to creativity and can serve as powerful tools for instruction and learning.

This philosophy is well presented in the humorous presentation by Sir Kenneth Robinson in the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY&feature=related>

Another article that I enjoyed is the following review of Failing Forward: by John Maxwell.

Failing Forward: Turning mistakes into stepping stones for success

Notes by Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, Ph.D.

Author bio and credits: John Maxwell is an expert on leadership. He has written more than 20 books and speaks to more than 250,000 people every year.

Author’s Big Thought: The difference between average people and achieving people is their perception of and their response to failure. This impacts every aspect of their lives. Failure is not a single event, it is a process.

Chapter 1. Realize that there is one major difference between average people and achieving people

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Chapter 2: Learn a new definition of failure and success. People are too quick to isolate events in their life and label them as failures. They need to see these incidents in the context of the bigger picture

7 things failure is not:

1. Failure is not avoidable. humans are bound to fail sooner or later.
2. Failure is not an event, but a process. Success is not a destination, but rather a journey you take and what you do day to day. Success is a process, and so is failure.
3. Failure is not objective. You are the only person who can label your actions a failure.
4. Failure is not the enemy. It takes adversity to achieve success. It is fertilizer.
5. Failure is not irreversible.
6. Failure is not a stigma and failures do not serve as permanent markers, but rather serve as steps to success
7. Failure is not final. Failure is simply a price we pay to achieve success and if we learn to embrace that new definition of failure, then we can move ahead.

source: <http://www.frumi.com/images/uploads/FailingForward2008.pdf>

When it comes to training elite performers, an insightful coach once told me that he works primarily on teaching his star athletes how to lose properly, especially in individual sports where there are few outright winners. After losses, he focuses his athletes on the positive aspects of each performance and uses the high level competition for goal setting and growth.

My two daughters play provincial level tennis. Although they win most matches here in the valley, most of their competitive development occurs during trips to the coast where they usually lose, and often quite handily. We work together to make sure that these are still positive experiences. For high achievers, success and failure are ways of life. The very best sales people experience tremendous amounts of rejection, but are able re-focus, remain positive and achieve the next sale.

Having the right attitude about failure makes success that much more attainable and enjoyable.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Chris Grieve

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