Rebuilding for Success: Using Failure to Succeed in the Workplace

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REBUILDING FOR SUCCESS
USING FAILURE TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKPLACE

BY

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Preface

Today's society faces many challenges. There are setbacks, failures and cutbacks in the work arena. What if so-called failures were used as stepping-stones toward success? Psychologically there are two choices when faced with failure, to either succumb to it or develop an alternative plan to deal with it. Escaping failure is often unavoidable. Rather than fear failure, embrace it head-on, build your self-esteem, and apply the experience as a learning tool.

Adversity is opportunity in disguise. Evaluate it and evolve it to move ahead personally and professionally. Learning from failure is what is special. Taking charge of your own actions can make what seems like a losing situation a win-win situation. Through reinvention, you can regain power, take control of your life, and start out on a new career path. Choosing the right mindset can mean the difference between out of control and guaranteed success. Although the first inclination is to move away from pain, it can sometimes help you to learn more about yourself.

Failure can help you recognize context within a job market and assist you to excel in the work place. Brainstorming can overcome roadblocks. There should be three solutions to every problem with no need to settle for any single idea. Use adversity to your advantage. You need to prepare yourself for re-engineering in and around the work place and business arena by having sure, stable footing. Once your feet are planted firmly on the ground, any adversity that comes your way may sway you, but will not knock you down.

The first objective is to determine the "what" of a failure. The second is to prove
the "why" and, thirdly, to use so-called failure as a pattern of success for future endeavors. Fear is commonly linked to failure and overcoming fear of failure is linked to achieving success. There are many feelings conjured up with failure and success but it is how the feelings are handled that determine whether the cycle of failure coincides with attaining success. Lifetrap, setbacks, failures and successes are highlighted throughout the following research. Change is never easy. The first step toward change is recognition. Through recognition, fear is challenged and success looms nearby.
The author would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who made it possible to complete this study. To begin, she would like to thank her family: her wonderful, loving mother, Elizabeth Verderosa, her two daughters, Heather and Ashley, and her granddaughter Gianna, for their understanding of time stolen from them so the author could pursue this endeavor. In memory of her father, "thanks Dad, for the words of wisdom." The author also wishes to thank the School of Graduate Medical Education for making this task possible, especially Mary Sisco and Joette McGill for their support. Thank you to Dr. Lombardi, whose inspiration finalized the topic. Lastly, the author would like to acknowledge Charles Gelish for his understanding, love, encouragement and support during the last two and a half years.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

When the author was a small child, her father always said, if you fall off a horse get right back up and ride. His theory was to have her overcome the fear of falling and never give up trying. In reality, this theory can be applied to all situations throughout a lifetime. The underlying message is to not fear failure, for it is better to have tried and failed, then it is to not have tried at all for fear of failing.

There is a tendency to attach strict limitations and rigorous perimeters to work related tasks. What if possibilities were explored to utilize failures in order to succeed at a task? In determining this thesis project, a topic was needed for researching. An entire summer was spent thinking about what the topic should be. Even when things seem hopeless, they rarely are (Abraham, 2002). The research class started in the fall and still the exact topic could not be narrowed down.

While gathering information for a questionnaire on an interim topic, it was concluded that the specific research area that had originally been chosen did not spark the writer's thought process. Finally, there was illumination. The author was sparked with an area of interest. The first topic might have been considered a failure, but was it? What constitutes failure? What causes it to occur? Can a particular failure be considered a stepping-stone toward success? This research limited to business, could branch off into personal and social settings. The
philosophy of the author's father, "If you fall, get right back up and try again" was haunting her. This was it! A thesis based on failure that ultimately leads to success would be the topic. Determined to provide proof that using failure as a learning tool can positively lead toward the road of success, the author presents this thesis.

Today, you cannot pick up a newspaper without reading about job layoffs, or hear television news reports announcing that blue chip companies such as IBM or Lucent Technologies or Dell Enterprises are having huge personnel cutbacks. The psychological blow of pink slips is something that hundreds of people experience. When failure is evident, there are two choices: to either succumb to it or develop an alternative plan to deal with it.

This study will focus on failure and how failure can be used to create success. Speaking of failure, however, can be difficult because it is one of the most intimate subjects anyone can share. Failure is a part of life and sooner or later it has to be faced. Escaping failure is often unavoidable. So, rather than fear failure, embrace the fear head-on, build self-esteem and acquire the necessary experience to use failure as a learning tool.

Research Question

Can psychoneurotic setbacks associated with failure in business and personal situations actually lead to dynamic ramifications in the form of stepping-stones to the top? This examination will investigate whether anyone who has failed, and sooner or later everybody will fail at something, can find a ritual, a
corrective action or the compassion and confidence to be an ultimate survivor by using failure as a corrective action tool for success. Adversity really is opportunity in disguise. It pushes you to evaluate and evolve, and ultimately, to move ahead personally and professionally (Abraham, 2002).

Subsidiary Questions

In an effort to comprehend failure and to use the consequences in a positive manner, this study will also be devoting time to answering the following questions.

#1. What are the common reasons for failure?
#2. What are the stages of failure?
#3. What is a good survival tactic?
#4. What do you do to get back on track and expand all choices?
#5. After setback, how do you forgive and re-establish new footing?
#6. In exploring, what hidden talents do you possess?
#7. How do you use these talents for a more meaningful life?
#8. Will learning how to cope with failure help you succeed in all phases of life?
#9. Can using success tools help you rebound?
#10. Can failure help make you better than before?

Purpose of the Study

Most everyone is afraid to fail. What if failure leads to success? Failure is a perfect teacher. There's no better way to learn. The best people experience it.
Learning from failure is what's special. The purpose of this study is to prove that failure in business can lead to stepping-stones toward success. By learning to overcome fear of failure, the path to success can become crystal clear. The author will focus on proving this theory. Any time two people come together on a business or personal level, one side is always asking the other, implicitly or explicitly, to assume most or all of the risk. Be the one ready to assume that risk by understanding and accepting potential negatives, such as looking bad, having to reverse a decision or taking a financial or an emotional hit (Abraham, p7, 2002).

One of the most troubling aspects of failure is that you feel out of control. Something has been done that you did not choose. Take, for example, the fact that you may have wanted to leave your job but you were fired before you could make the decision to leave. Because you were fired, you feel devastated. Why? Because you did not choose the situation and you had no control over it. Failure like this makes you feel powerless and makes you the victim. But, it doesn't have to. Through reinvention, failure can mean regaining power, taking control of your life and starting on a new career path. Choosing the right mindset can bring you to the path of control and success (Hyatt & Gottlieb, 1993).

The author will attempt to use research, personal interviews and questionnaires to determine the type of personal set-backs experienced in business. A select group of individuals will be surveyed and the questionnaires will be used to determine how the individuals reacted to failure. The author's intent is to find out whether or not these respondents learned something from the
experience and whether or not these experiences led toward success. There is a logical, effective way to get around, through, over and under adversity. While it may be your inclination to move away from pain, it can sometimes help you learn more about yourself (Abraham, 2002).

Need for the Study

The author chose this subject because there is a need for people to overcome fear of failure and to use failure as a learning tool to become indispensable in the business world. With re-engineering happening in the workplace and business arena, you need to prepare yourself with sound footing. Failure can help you recognize context within a job market and assist you to excel in the workplace. Brainstorm ideas to overcome roadblocks. There is no need to settle for a single idea, rather, strive for three solutions to every problem. Once the dark tunnel of adversity has been traveled, little else will scare you and you can learn to use any future adversities to your advantage (Abraham, 2002).

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said that, "Whatever your life's work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better." You have to know that you can make a difference and if it means taking risks and failing, it is worth the trip.

Objectives

The intention of this study will be to observe failures in the business world and determine how so-called failures can be used to lead individuals toward the path of success. The first objective will be to determine the "what" of a failure.
What do you consider a failure? The second objective of this study will be to prove the “why” of a failure. Why did you fail at what you did? Or, what caused you to fail? Thirdly, the author will illustrate how so-called failures can demonstrate a pattern of success for all future endeavors. Through the review of the literature, the author intends to qualitatively and quantitatively analyze the reasons for failure and the patterns for future successes in the business world. Well-known producer, Billy Wilder, famous producer, once said, “Trust your instincts. Your mistakes might as well be your own instead of someone else’s.”

Definition of Terms

#1. Failure: Failure is a judgment regarding events; omission of occurrence or performance; failing to perform a duty or expected action.

#2. Psychoneurotic: A neurotic behavior based on emotional conflict in which an impulse that has been blocked seeks expression in a disguised response or symptom.


#4. Qualitatively: Using words, feelings, motives or perceptsives to come to a conclusion.

#5. Quantitatively: Numbers, percentages, time and money, survey collation.

#6. Devastated: Overwhelmed.


#8. Victim: Injured party.

#9. Set-back: Hindrance or delay.
#10. Success: Achievement or accomplishment.

#11. Ritual: Any formal and customarily repeated act or series of acts.

#12. Corrective action: Positive action taken to correct any situation.

#13. Succumb: To give way or yield.


Limitations

To an extent, this study is inhibited by its exclusive focus on the business world. There are numerous ways to investigate failures in personal and social arenas, which could be used as stepping-stones toward success; however, this study will mainly focus on the business-working environment. The author will investigate business success linked to personal and social aspects as well. Because of the volumes of studies done in all the above-mentioned areas of failure, the best-case scenario would be to utilize the business environment for purposes of this thesis, touching on the psychological aspect for failure. Shunryu Suzuki, a Japanese Buddhist scholar, lectures to remember to always keep an open mind. If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything. It is open to everything. In the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind, there are few. A journey can begin with discovery, sometimes failure, but always keep a curiosity for the unknown.
Before introducing the concept of using personal failure to gain success, the author will first acquaint you with research background broken into three sections; life traps, setbacks and achieving success. Once these components are investigated, the author will conclude. First, we will look at life traps, a possible contributor to failure. In a word analogy, fear is commonly linked to the word failure and overcoming fear of failure is linked to achieving success. There are many feelings that are conjured up with the terms failure and success. It is how these feelings are handled that determines whether the cycle of failure coincides with attaining success. In the words of ex-Yankee baseball player, Yogi Berra, “It ain’t over until it’s over (Berra, 2001).”

**Life Traps**

Life is full of traps; unsatisfactory relationships, irrational lack of self-esteem, feelings of being unfulfilled, all of which can be considered problems easily solved by changing the way messages are internalized. Self-defeating behavior patterns are life traps. These patterns can start in childhood and repeat throughout the life cycle, a sort of self-prophecy history. Young and Klosko (1993) support that patterns in personality can be developed by something that damaged you in your formidable years. Damaged can be defined as being abandoned, criticized, overprotected, abused, excluded or deprived,
and, eventually, these types of life traps become part of your behavior pattern and who you are. In order to change these life traps, you must be able to recognize them and understand their origins (Young & Klosko, 1993).

Young and Klosko (1993) further argue that life traps determine how you think, feel, act, and relate to others. Life traps can trigger strong feelings such as anger, sadness, and anxiety. Even when you appear to have everything such as social status, an ideal marriage, the respect of people close to you, career success, etc., you are often unable to savor life or believe in your greatest accomplishments. The technical term for a life trap is a schema and the concept comes from cognitive psychology. Schemas are deeply entrenched beliefs of how the world affects who you are. Schemas, learned early in life, are central to your sense of self. These early beliefs provide a sense of predictability and certainty that are comfortable and familiar. Young and Klosko (1993) claim that life traps show up in your personal life and in your career path.

Some life traps cause you to fail because these traps translate into a sense of being inadequate in areas of achievement, such as school, work, and sports. Life traps can represent failing relative to peers. Young and Klosko (1993) agree that a child, being made to feel inferior in terms of achievement, can spin into a failure pattern as an adult. As an adult, life traps are maintained by exaggerating the degree of past failures and by acting in ways that ensure continued failure (Young & Klosko, p21 1993),
Self-Esteem

The most precious gift in the world is having a real and genuine sense of your own value. Positive self-esteem lends a feeling of security in personal worth, social situations and in work aspects. The opposite feeling is low self-esteem where you feel insecure. Failure creates low self-esteem and causes a lack of self-confidence in vulnerable areas such as intimate relationships, social situations or in the workforce. Low self-esteem and failure are almost always linked together and correspond to feelings of unworthiness, inadequate achievements and sub par work. There is a sense that you are less successful, less talented or less intelligent than your peers (Young & Klosko, 1993).

Here's a few failures you most likely experienced but hardly remember: The first time you tried to walk, but fell down; The first time you tried to talk, but could hardly utter a sound; The first time you dressed yourself and looked like a clown; But, you didn't give up (Jolley, 1999)! We all fail sometimes: it's a part of success. Just don't stop trying. Don't worry about failure, worry about the chances you may miss if you don't even try (Jolley, 1999).

Self-evaluation has profound effects on your thinking process, emotions, desires, values and goals. In fact, it is the single most significant key to behavior. Self-esteem is the very nature of understanding the degree and the standards being used to judge you. Self-esteem, or the lack of it, is the reputation you acquire with yourself (Branden, 1989). If, in spite of all of your best efforts, you fail in a particular undertaking, you do not experience the same emotional pride that you would have felt if you had succeeded at that task. But, if you are
rationale, your self-esteem is unaffected and unimpaired. Your self-esteem is not, or should not be, dependent on particular successes or failures, since these are not necessarily in your direct control and/or not in your exclusive control (Branden, 1989).

Life traps and self-esteem are long-term patterns. They are deeply ingrained, and like addiction or a bad habit, they are hard to change. Change requires willingness to experience pain. You have to face the life trap head-on and understand it. Change also requires discipline. You have to systematically observe and change behaviors every day. Change cannot be hit-or-miss. It requires constant practice (Young & Klosko, 1993). Every achievement we accomplish is a value in itself, which becomes a stepping-stone to greater achievement and values. Self-esteem is, "I can." Pride is, "I have." The deepest pride comes from achievement of self-esteem. Self-esteem is a value earned that makes you feel proud of that attainment. The key to motivation is self-esteem by either its presence or its absence. The most eloquent testimony to the need of self-esteem is the terror that haunts the lives of those who fail to achieve it, the twisted paths along which that terror drives them, and the inevitable wreckage at the end (Branden, 1989).

Failure Recognition

Failure feeds on itself in such a way that an entire work arena can become a disaster. The expectation of failure can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if you don't learn to recognize the signs. You must ask yourself if fear of failure is based on the fear of death. Humans are conditioned to failure. The earth
shakes, grass dies, stars fall, businesses collapse, the body decays. Death is a constant threat as is failure. To overcome failure, you have to be converted to the positive, and then reconditioned to think positively and to learn how to recognize the signs of failure (Petrulli, John, 2001).

Christopher M. Knight considers failure as an important part of your success, in so much as not repeating your mistakes. Failure can be considered not acting on the dreams and visions you have for yourself or not picking yourself up after you mess up. Failure is hurting others for personal gain, whether on purpose or accident. Failure is failing to understand why you are here in the first place and failing to understand that you are here to serve others and in exchange, your needs will be taken care of. Failure is not continually raising your standards each day and accepting complacency (Knight, 2002).

On the verge of ridiculousness to prove a point, Young and Klosko (1993) detail below sure ways of sabotaging yourself for failure in the workplace.

1. Do not take steps necessary to develop solid skills in your career such as finishing school, reading latest developments in your field, or becoming an apprentice to an expert. Simply coast and try to fool people.

2. Choose a career below your potential. (You finished college, have excellent mathematical ability, but are currently driving a taxicab.)

3. Avoid taking steps necessary for getting promotions in your chosen career. Although advancement may have been halted, refuse to accept promotions or ask for them. Do not promote yourself or make your abilities widely known to those who count. Simply stay in a safe, dead-end job.
4. Do not tolerate working for other people, or working at entry-level jobs, just stay at the periphery of your field, failing to work your way up the ladder.

5. Take jobs and get repeatedly fired because of lateness procrastination, poor job performance, bad attitude, etc.

6. Float from job to job never developing a career and never becoming an expert in any one area. Become a generalist in a job environment that rewards specialists and therefore never progress very far in any one career.

7. Select a career in which it is extraordinarily hard to succeed and act as if you don't know when to give up.

8. Don't take initiative or make decisions independently at work so you are never promoted to more responsible positions.

9. Always feel that you are basically stupid or untalented, and therefore feel fraudulent, even though objectively you have been quite successful.

10. Minimize your abilities and accomplishments and exaggerate your weaknesses and mistakes. Prove that you are a failure even though you have been as successful as your peers.

11. Choose successful men/women as partners in relationships, live vicariously through their success, and never accomplish anything for yourself.

12. Compensate for your lack of achievement or work skills by focusing on other assets such as your looks, charm, and youthfulness and how you sacrifice for others. Most of all, underneath it all, always feel like a failure.

This exercise demonstrates a pattern of escape used to avoid taking
necessary steps toward advancement. Avoidance can twist events to reinforce your view of yourself as stupid, untalented and incompetent. As stated by Branden (1989) in *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*, self-esteem is not a value, which, once achieved, is maintained effortlessly and automatically thereafter. Action is necessary not only to gain it, but also to keep it. "Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action (Ibid, Unknown)."

**Setbacks**

Anyone moving ahead in life is going to have setbacks. The only ones who don't experience setbacks are people who are either dead or have just given up. As long as you are trying to achieve something in life, you will have setbacks. The difference between winners and losers and long-term success is not talent or ability, but the way setbacks and adversity are handled and viewed. Losers see setbacks as the end of the road, while winners see them as a bend in the road. It only takes a minute to learn that a setback is nothing but a setup for a comeback (Jolley, 1999).

Consider the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "It is far better to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat. The joy of living is his who has the heart to demand it."

According to Gelb (2001), failure is a gateway to innovation. You don't have to be an engineer to use it to your advantage. In art, in theater, in class and
In sports, the lesson is always the same; in order to progress you need to bring your small defeats into the open. Only in examining them can you turn them into positives (Gelb, 2001). Gelb’s view is liberating. If there are no intrinsically “wrong” answers, you have no reason to be embarrassed about setbacks. In fact, you should celebrate them. They mean you are on the way to a breakthrough.

While attaining success, it is good to become aware of setbacks. No one wants to crash and burn. The same is true on the road to success. Beware of things that will keep you from your destination. Fear is one of the worst enemies of success. If fear keeps you in bondage, you will never be able to reach for your dreams. Conquering fear and stepping forward to reach new ideas is what makes success possible. Lethargy keeps most people from success because they don’t have the energy, or don’t have what it takes to move to the next level. Don’t get lethargic; get going! Oftentimes a race is lost because of lack of perseverance. In real estate they say the three most important things are location, location, location. In success the most important things are perseverance, perseverance, perseverance (Widener, 2002).

Do you consider yourself an optimist or a pessimist? If you can’t believe that you will achieve, then you won’t. Be sure that pessimism will prove yourself right every time. Develop your optimism by looking for ways to believe that you will achieve success. Unsuccessful people do not take responsibility. Once you accept that you can be responsible, and you are responsible, you will be on the road to success. You are a product of your environment, this is why it is
essential to hang around with people who will spur you on, not hold you back. Quality people encourage you and strengthen you in your quest for success. Finally, the last setback is to not have vision. Acquire the ability to look ahead to see the future. Imagine the good that can come from your life and you will achieve success (Widener, 2002).

Beating Success Self-Sabotage

There are many people that we know who are intelligent, creative and talented, yet they always seem to sabotage their success. Consciously or not, these people believe they are not worthy of success. This condition affects men and women about equally. Common symptoms include self-sabotage—just stopping short of success; financial insecurity; feeling like a failure—even if your succeeding; finding it easy to start things but hard to finish them; and staying in work that does not require or allow the full expression of your talents or skills. Why do we hold ourselves back? Say you were in a fun house and saw yourself in the mirror that distorted your appearance? This distorted reflection is like a bully in your head that stops you from doing what you really want to do. Everyone has his/her own special friend of self-defeating inner messages. Some typical comments might be, “Just grow up... I’m so fat, no one could ever love me... everyone always leaves me.” Sound familiar? This destructive habit can be broken (St. John, 2000).

According to St. John (2000), you need to see yourself as you really are. Instead of a fun-house mirror, find a loving mirror—a friend, spouse, and mentor—who supports you unconditionally. Surround yourself with unconditional
love, and it will reflect back your true self. Next, be willing to get what you want. Few people realize that what they want is also what they fear. Establish goal-free zones. Set a time, place or circumstance when you do not do anything—where there are no goals, deadlines or responsibilities. Such a zone allows you to relax and listen to yourself and your inner longings. Next, have a goal replacement. If your goal is something gigantic, such as serving the world or making everyone happy and nothing you do will ever be good enough, replace impossible goals with realistic ones. Lastly, list things you would do if you had the time and/or money. Then, don't do them. Does not taking action make you want to do them more? Who is stopping you from doing what you want? When we think someone is depriving us of something, we want it. But if we deprive ourselves, we often put up with it for a long time. Instead, twice a day, do something you enjoy.

**Routines**

Routines are beneficial because they allow you to get things done without much thought. Routines can be harmful, however, if they prevent you from developing new ideas. Sometimes habits become so integral to thinking that you fail to identify habits and instead consider them “the way things are done.” An occasional jolt to shake you out of mental patterns, or “a whack on the side of the head” can stimulate you to ask questions that lead to new answers (VonOech, 2001). The nineteenth-century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, had similar feelings. In *Twilight of the Idols*, he stated, “That which does not kill me makes me stronger.”
Suppose there was an obstacle in the path of your routine that prevented you from reaching your objective. As a result, one of the following could happen:

1. You could use your creative abilities to eliminate the obstacle;
2. You could go around the obstacle and find another way to reach your objective;
3. You could find a new objective that is preferable to the original one and you wouldn't have discovered it had you not been forced off the routine path; or,
4. You could question whether you even need to reach your objective.

Thus, opposition, in the form of problems and obstacles, could provide the benefit of forcing you to stop and rethink what you are doing (VonOech, 2001). As stated by Gilbert (1995), the ten most powerful two-letter words are, "If it is to be it is up to me (Gilbert, 1995)." Therefore, routines need to be used as stepping-stones to bigger and better things, not complacency.

**Failure Patterns**

The biggest reason for career failure is poor interpersonal skills and it is the single most important skill to acquire. Hyatt and Gottlieb (1993) support that if you fail for this reason, you never realize this is the real cause. Skills described as “social intelligence” consist of being sensitive to others; listening; giving and taking criticism well; being emotionally steady and building team support. Change is never easy, but the first step is recognition. Two important differences separate the successful from the unsuccessful. The successful have total integrity and an outstanding ability to understand others (Hyatt & Gottlieb, 1993).
We don't always learn our lesson the first time around. Paul Wolf (Wolf, 2001), asserts that because mistakes are inevitable, you must admit you've made one and take responsibility for it; diagnose how it happened; determine how you can set things right so permanent damage isn't done; ask yourself what you can do to ensure it won't happen again and maintain a positive attitude. After all, life is a learning laboratory. Wolf supports learning to prioritize your tasks. If you allow yourself the freedom to be upset with a situation, the rest of us must be gentle with your ego. It's okay to be imperfect. You must learn to forgive yourself and move on. When a mistake is made, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do I have to do now to set this situation right?
2. What do I need to do to ensure this doesn't happen again?
3. What specific phrase or mantra can I use to avert a repeat mistake?

Bob Dylan sang, "There is no success like failure and failure's no success at all." Regrettably, most focus on the second half of the lyric, but success comes to those who learn as they go (Wolf, 2001). "How to avoid criticism forever: Say nothing, do nothing, be nothing."

Achieving Success

According to Stephen Covey who wrote the national number one bestseller, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, you must begin with an end in mind and remember to put first things first (Covey, 1990). To succeed in business, or anything for that matter, you must think win/win. Covey's (1990) definition of win/win is that there is plenty for everybody and that one person's
success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. "It's not your way or my way, it's a better way, a higher way (Covey, p207, 1990)." You must be willing to accept responsibility for failure before you are able to accept responsibility for success. By accepting responsibility for failure, you open yourself to be tested a second time, which will save you from a previous failure. You must accept responsibility for failure, which ultimately enables you to accept responsibility for success (Petrulli, 2001).

Fear is a good reason people avoid success - fear of what success will do to your life, fear of not being able to succeed, fear of too much success and just fear in general. Fear is universal. Everyone has fears, and everyone has fears related to career achievement. The reality is, success is scary, and so what? You must learn to face this anxiety and get rid of the fear of being rejected. Being afraid to succeed is common among both men and women. If you are afraid of success, it's a sure bet you're not going to get it. Fear does not just vanish. It has to be tackled head on. You must acknowledge that it is there and get on with it. Take your fear along with you and work with it, not against it. Recognizing this reality is the key to success in everything you do (Hyatt, 1998).

In college football, various pre-season polls, weekly pools, computer rankings, etc., inundate you. In politics, you are inundated by different polls, exit polls, pre-race polls, demographics, etc. Regardless of the outcome of the football games, or of the election, victory is determined by the slimmest of margins. The winner won't be the one who has done one giant great play, but the consistent winner of close games will be the one who does the little things well. This is a good lesson
for you in your personal and professional life. Success doesn't usually occur from one great event, but from doing the everyday things, the mundane and routine very well and over a period of time (Foster, 2001). Yogi Berra (2001) articulates, "to succeed in anything, you need good intuition and powers of observation. It helps to have a good memory. But, most important, keep thinking and you will solve most problems you face (Berra, 2001)."

Everyone experiences some type of failure, but if you remember to make failure a friend, you can let each setback bring you one step closer to success. John C. Maxwell, founder of The Injoy Group, underscores the issue of failing. He wrote that failing forward is the only way to take advantage of new opportunities for success. In his 30 years of training people to be high achievers, he learned that anyone can learn to fail forward. He outlines using failure for success as follows:

1. Don't take all the blame for failure, instead, think through the reason for the failure and put your own role into proper perspective. Remember to not let yourself off the hook too easily. Always ask yourself what you might have done to increase the likelihood of success.

2. Take action to reduce your fear. Once you have failed at something, you might be reluctant to act again until you have convinced yourself that the possibility of failing again has been eliminated. Instead, accept the possibility that you could fail again but acknowledge that each failure offers a new chance to learn and move ahead.

3. Change yourself. If you keep failing, it is likely the problem lies
with you and not the situation you are in. Work at understanding your role in the failure, knowing you must do it differently next time so you can profit from the experience. “It’s not what happens to you that makes the difference, it is what happens in you (Maxwell, 2002).”

4. When you succeed, look for bigger challenges. If you don’t fail at least occasionally, you’re not stretching yourself. You are, in fact, avoiding failure by staying in the same rut. Once you have stopped challenging yourself, you have ceased to grow. Just as you shouldn’t let failure grind you down, don’t let success lull you into complacency. Don’t let a string of successes convince you that you have somehow arrived at your destiny. The best you can hope for is to maintain a state of personal growth.

5. There is a small difference between success and failure. Human nature perceives the gap as gigantic. When you fail, you think you are miles from success. When you succeed, you think you are miles from failure. The reality is, the gap between success and failure is seldom very wide.

Successful Undertakings

To become successful, consider slightly increasing your ratio of success to failure. If your success ratio is 50% right, increasing it by 10% could make an enormous difference in your life. You should make a concerted effort to learn from each failure. If you do, you will soon find yourself doing more of what you do when you succeed and less of what you do when you fail (Maxwell, 2002).

Habit seven from Stephen Covey's, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective*
People states that Habit 7 is taking time to sharpen the saw. It is the habit that makes all the others possible. It preserves and enhances the greatest asset you have—you. It renews the dimensions of your nature—physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional (Covey, p288, 1990).

Covey (1990) wrote, that to "sharpen the saw" basically means expressing your motivations. It means exercising dimensions of your nature, regularly and consistently in wise and balanced ways. To do this, you must be proactive. This is the single most powerful investment you can ever make in life—investment in yourself. In order to be effective, you need to recognize the importance of taking time regularly to sharpen the saw in all ways (Covey, p288-289, 1990).

Napoleon Hill hypothesizes in the CornerStone Publication that it is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed (Cottrell & Layton, 2002). One of the biggest benefits from going the extra mile is the emphasis it requires you to place on your own personal initiative. According to Andrew Carnegie, you cannot push anyone up a ladder unless he is willing to climb it himself (Cottrell & Layton, 2002). He also supports that there are two types of people who never amount to anything. There are those who never do anything except what they are told to do. And there are those who cannot even do what they are told to do. The people who get ahead do the things that should be done without being told. And they don't stop there. They go the extra mile and do much more than expected (Hill, 1997).
Even if you have failed at something, your progress toward success begins with a fundamental question: Where are you going? Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement and its lack is the stumbling block for ninety-eight out of every hundred people simply because they never define their goals and start toward them. If you study every person you can think of who has achieved lasting success, you will find that each one has had a definite major purpose. Each had a plan for reaching that goal and each devoted the greatest part of his or her thoughts and efforts to that end (Hill, 1997).

Hill (1997) argues that the difference between a wish and a burning desire is crucial. Everyone wants the better things in life—money, fame, respect—but most never go beyond just wishing for them. If you know what you want from life, if you are determined to get to the point of obsession and back, then with continuous effort and sound planning, you have awakened and developed definiteness of purpose and success is around the bend (Hill, 1997). There is a proverb, which says: If you would plant for days, plant flowers. If you would plant for years, plant trees. If you would plant for eternity, plant ideas!

Definiteness of purpose helps you recognize your success consciousness that will destine you for success. A dominating idea, plan, or purpose held in your conscious mind through repeated effort and an emotional burning desire for its realization is taken over by the subconscious and acted upon through whatever natural and logical means available. The intensity in which you impress your subconscious with a picture of your plan directly affects the speed in which the subconscious will go to work to attract the physical counterpart by inspiring
you to take the right steps. If you apply your personal initiative at every opportunity—especially after you have made a foolish mistake—then it will benefit both you and your position (Hill, 1997).

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once stated that the talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, and doing well whatever you do, without the thought of fame (Van Ekeren, 2001). Success is the result of the continual process of becoming who you already are and loving what you do. No pretenses, no uncharacteristic behaviors, no facades; just a revealing of true character. A fundamental characteristic of success is the ability to find out what you are good at and do it with a passion regardless of whether or not anyone else notices.

Curtis Carlson advises, that you must listen to your own heart. You can't be successful if you aren't happy with what you're doing. The key is being involved in something that utilizes your natural abilities. There is nothing worse than attempting to motivate yourself in a position or activity that does not compliment your talent (Van Ekeren, 2001).

Michael Korda comments that your chances of success are directly proportional to the degree of pleasure you derive from what you do. If you are in a job you hate, face the fact squarely and get out. As the old saying goes, "If the horse is dead, dismount." It's not possible to ascend any further than what you are without first making sure that where you are is where you want to be. Before jumping overboard, however, consider this. If you have a job that fails to stimulate, fulfill and energize you, maybe there is a simple solution. How about
changing your attitude about your job? Maybe you don’t have to dismount. Could it be possible that changing how you view your life could ignite a new flame (Van Ekeren, 2001)?

White Hobbs concludes that success is waking up in the morning, whoever you are, wherever you are, however old or young, and bounding out of bed because there’s something out there that you love to do, that you believe in, that you’re good at...something that’s bigger than you are, and you can hardly wait to get at it again today. Approaching everything you do with that upbeat attitude is bound to result in success (Van Ekeren, 2001).

There is a miniscule difference between success and failure. Success begins on the inside. Michael Jordan said that the heart is what separates the good from the great. Newsman Walter Cronkite declared that he couldn’t imagine a person becoming a success who hasn’t given the game of life everything he’s got. Bill Martin, once manager for the New York Yankees, said that if you play for me, you play the game like you play life. You play it to be successful, you play it with dignity, you play it with pride, you play it aggressively, and you play it as well as you possibly can. To be successful, do a little more, raise the performance bar a little higher, expect higher results, and stick it out when things aren’t going exactly as planned. To be successful, invest more of yourself into your relationships. Continually monitor your attitude and make sure your energies are directed to your top priorities. Understand the need for total commitment to the task at hand and be determined to see it through to successful completion. To be successful is to be involved in a lifelong process of
skill and competency development. Don't be afraid to stand out from the crowd. In fact, enjoy it (Van Ekeren, 2001).

Never allow someone else or something outside of your control prevent you from succeeding. Give up all excuses, the blame game, and finger pointing. Michael Koerda, editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster advises that success on any major scale requires you to accept responsibility. In the final analysis, the one quality that all successful people have is the ability to take on responsibility. Basically, man dreads responsibility but it is the one choice that will make a substantial difference in changing your life. If you want to be happy with the life you live, get in charge. Take responsibility for where you are and where you're going. You are accountable for the results. You always have been and always will be. If you don't accept responsibility, you will soon identify yourself as a victim and victims lead lives full of frustration, rationalization, blame, defensiveness and excuses. Van Ekeren (2001) underscores that he cherishes two questions that guard him from the snare of victimization. He advised to first, do what you want. Secondly, what are you willing to do to make it happen? The responsibility is on one person—you yourself (Van Ekeren, 2001).

Conclusion

There are two kinds of people, those who get things done and those who wait for all the conditions to be just right before attempting anything. Achievement is the result of doing what needs to be done, whether or not you feel like doing it. Don't wait to feel good before doing well. Pay the price now
and experience the satisfaction of a job well done. Vince Lombardi said that to achieve success, whatever the job is, you must pay a price for success. You have to pay the price to win and you have to pay the price to get to the point where success is possible. Most important, you must pay the price to stay there (Van Ekeren, 2001).

The power of positive thinking in business can make you successful. Negative thinking can be easily turned around, such as the following thoughts on downsizing. Negative self-talk might be, "I'm too old to get a job now." "How will I pay my bills?" And, "Why me? They should have let John go instead." This kind of talk can lead you to make rash, hasty decisions such as taking the first job that comes along, selling your home or becoming physically ill or depressed from worry. What if you turned your thinking around into positive thinking? The comments on downsizing could be, "I'm actually relieved. I've been in a rut for years and this gives me the opportunity to try something different." "I'm smart, resourceful, energetic and dedicated. I should have no problem finding another job." Another answer could be, "This gives me the time I've needed with my family while I explore a new career path." How you choose to view a situation makes all the difference in the world (Ventrella, 2001).

Be a high performer in the workplace and be in step with reality. Do not blow things out of proportion or read too much into situations. Accept the fact that difficult people and unpleasant situations come with the territory. Understand that you are not perfect. Put your mistakes and failures into perspective, learn from them, and move forward in pursuit of your goals.
(Ventrella, 2001). As stated by Michael Korda, American Publishing Executive and Author, "To succeed, it is necessary to accept the world as it is and rise above it."

Zig Ziglar in his best seller, Over the Top, (1997) supports that you are over the top when you clearly understand that failure is an event, not a person; that yesterday ended last night, and today is your brand new day. You're over the top when you've made friends with your past, are focused on the present, and optimistic about your future. You're over the top when you know that success (a win) doesn't make you, and failure (a loss) doesn't break you (Ziglar, 1997).
To attain success, you have to be effective and motivated and be able to determine how these objectives fit into the larger scheme of things. Often the road of life is traveled without a specific destination or direction. If you don't know where you are going, don't make a point of finding out where you are and don't stop to ask, the map will remain locked in the glove box. In rare cases, you might be happy just wondering, living the gypsy life, but, for most, that existence proves unsatisfactory (Gray, 1998).

Today's work force is experiencing a giant wake-up call. Career tracks were once long, frenetic workweeks with no time for a personal life. The worker could look forward to ample rewards of titles, prestige and money from companies. The prevailing mindset was that career was more important than the rest of life (Pagano, 2001). Many executives were stopped in their tracks as organizations restructured, merged and/or downsized. These events jarred the definition of success and happiness and caused the reassessment of the big picture. In 1992, a survey conducted by the Roper Organization showed that 53 percent of men and women said their definition of being successful had changed in the last five years. Asked to choose three out of seven things that would make them feel personally successful, respondents ranked the traditional trappings of money, career and power dead last (Pagano, 2001).
There are three kinds of people: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who ask, "What in the world happened?" In order to become a success in the business world, you have to be a mover and a shaker. Success in any field takes time and success is measured by means of hard work and achieving goals. Things don't just happen. Life should be spent preparing for when opportunity knocks and learning how to recognize opportunity when it happens. You must pick yourself up after experiencing a setback. This survey was created to determine whether a perceived failure, in a personal or business category of one's life, actually proved to benefit that individual by leading to success. Is it possible to rebuild for success by using the experience of what is considered a failure as a tool or a stepping-stone?

Questionnaire Design

Taking time to rediscover you is one of the most valuable tools for ensuring success and happiness. What works in the first half of life, does not necessarily work in the second half. As life's journey continues, adolescence is crowned "the most difficult passage." The second most difficult stretch is the middle, signaling the passage to the second half of life. Many are redefining the role of work in their lives. Personal success is viewed less in terms of how much money is made or how much corporate power is obtained and more in terms of living quality lives that allow time for family, friends and ourselves (Pagano, 2001).

This survey was distributed to those in the workplace, at varied stages of career, who experienced some type of failure within the past five years whether
in business, personal or social arenas to determine how that failure was viewed and whether or not it was used as a learning tool ultimately leading to success.

The questionnaire design (Figure 1-1, page 32) begins with the author's narrative of the overview and objective of the survey.

FIGURE 1-1

Deborah Verderosa
Thesis Survey

USING FAILURE TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKPLACE
Rebuilding for Success

Overview: The basis of this survey is to determine whether failure in personal and business aspects of one's life could create stepping-stones that lead to success in business. We often have a fear of failure, but could that fear be overcome if failure were used as a learning tool?

Objective: This questionnaire will be used to determine the candid assessment of the topic of whether you believe that personal or business setbacks, which almost always occur at some time or another, can be used to rebuild and lead to future success in the workplace.

This research is being done as part of the thesis to earn a Masters Degree in Corporate and Public Communication. It will take less than ten minutes to answer. Please read the statement and circle the number closest to your personal feeling. Results will be handled confidentially and tabulated in an anonymous form. All original forms will be destroyed.

If you would like a copy of the results, please feel free to contact me or attend my thesis presentation in May of 2002 at Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, New Jersey 07079.

The overview states that the basis of the survey is to determine whether failure in personal and business aspects of one's life could create stepping-stones that lead to success in business. Often there is a fear of failure, but could that fear be overcome if failure were used as a learning tool? The objective narrative states that the questionnaire will be used to determine the candid assessment of the topic, using failure to succeed in the workplace, and whether the respondent believes that personal or business setbacks, which almost always occur at some time or another, can be used to rebuild and lead to future success in the workplace.
The survey (Figure 2-1, page 33) includes ten statements allowing the respondent to answer in the following five categories: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, based on their own experience and all were measured in terms of percentage.

**FIGURE 2-1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Statement: An overview evaluation of the most common reasons for failure in the workplace and resultant reactions and perceptions, which lead to success.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedural Guidelines:</strong> Interview 25 to 50 individuals who have experienced some type of failure in the past five years whether in business, personal or social areas. <strong>Please circle the answer of your choice on the basis of your own experience.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA = Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A = Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD = Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My initial tendency is to blame others when failure occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After taking the time to reflect on a job-related failure, I tend to be more accountable for my actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Good interpersonal skills can lead to more constructive reactions to workplace failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The &quot;wrong&quot; working environment can easily hinder my success on the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that a lack of personal commitment can often lead to performance failure in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Workplace failure can have a profound negative affect on personal self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-esteem can be eroded over time with workplace failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In my opinion, fear of failure can lead to low motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Overestimating myself can lead to workplace failure and resultant stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Fear of the unknown can limit my strategy in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:** Please provide additional comments based on personal situations regarding the above.
The total number of questionnaires collected was 50. Each question answered counted as two points, which was multiplied times the number of responses under each category and divided by 100 to determine the percentage. The ten statements designed for this survey contain a personal stance into the most common reasons for personal failure or workplace failure. The statements were evaluated based on resultant reactions and perceptions of failure to determine whether failure can lead to success through the utilization of setbacks. The intent of the survey was to elicit a positive or negative reaction based on the concept of what might be considered failure, what constitutes failure, how failure is or should be dealt with, and whether or not failure will lead to success where failure is used as a strategy, or a tool, or a stepping-stone toward achievement.

The survey asked for comments or additional information based on personal situations regarding the ten statements. The last page of the survey (Figure 3-1, page 35) contained general information asking such questions as gender and age and three questions asking if failure ever produced a personal stepping-stone, if personal failure ever caused changes to be made, and whether or not failure was considered a new beginning.
**Purpose of the Survey**

This survey was developed to assess how individuals perceive failure and whether or not that perception hinders or enhances advancement capability in the workplace. What is considered failure and what constitutes success? In reviewing the literature, there are arguments on what causes one to fail and what one does to succeed. The purpose of this survey was to either coincide or refute the viewpoints uncovered in researching the literature and to determine personal viewpoints of the respondents. The survey was administered to individuals at different career levels to give a unique insight into the theme of the study and a freedom to expand on the research of others.

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**General Information**

Please answer all, some or none of the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please circle your gender:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Please circle your age group:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 20</td>
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<td>31-40</td>
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<td>41-50</td>
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<td>51-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 &amp; above</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Has failure ever produced a personal stepping-stone for you?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please explain:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Has a personal failure ever caused you to make changes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please explain:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have you ever considered failure as a new beginning?</td>
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</table>

Thank you for your time and candid comments.
Population and Sample

In order to receive a quantitative response relevant to this study, the goal was set to survey and/or interview at least 25 to 50 individuals. The procedural guidelines state that individuals surveyed must have experienced some type of personal or business failure in the past five years. The reasoning behind this qualification was to attain a qualified pool of individuals who: (a) have learned a valuable lesson through a set-back and (b) used that set-back as a stepping-stone toward success or (c) used that set-back as a learning tool. The sample for the survey was met by concentrating on professional individuals such as professors, business administrators, students, secretaries, politicians and government officials. The age category of the respondents was varied from below twenty to over sixty years of age. This gave the reviewer a better perspective into the mindset of individuals who were at different career levels.

The data from the survey (Figure 4-1, page 37) compiled the following results: respondents below the age of 20 more often answered in the neutral category regarding work related statements, yet commented on personal failure.
Those surveyed between the ages of 21 and up more often answered agree or strongly agree to statements. The survey revealed that the responses that skewed toward agree and strongly agree came from those with the most working/life experience. The greatest revelation of the survey and to the surprise
of the author was that every respondent answered, "Yes" to the general comment, "Have you ever considered failure as a new beginning?"

Two personal interviews collectively coincided. The respondents were professionals, one a male and one a female, who volunteered to participate in the interview process but asked that their names not be revealed. The male, in his 60's, claimed that failure did produce a personal stepping-stone for him. He was able to overcome a personal failure with hard work and motivation and is now a self-made millionaire. He stated that a personal failure caused him to make changes in his study habits and desires and he went on to become a success. Although retired from his life-long position as a police lieutenant, and financially secure, he is still working in law enforcement part-time with no mention of retirement.

A female respondent, in the age range of 21-30, felt that a so-called failure had produced a stepping-stone for her. Failure, according to her, is an opportunity for self-improvement. It is an indication that she must try harder the next time. The female's perspective on using personal failure to make changes was also interesting. She stated that a failure would cause her to work differently. She would utilize the failure to evaluate the approach she had taken that resulted in the negative outcome and turn it around. Although she could not say anything major had occurred to her so far, she could state that she had failed at personal situations or rather called them "personal disappointments." She felt that failure might not be the right word but could say that at times she was disappointed for not achieving the goals or standards she had set for herself.
The female, a full-time junior executive in a large corporation and a part-time student, is looking forward to a promising career path.

The perspectives differed, and they were years apart and at different career levels, yet the result was the same with profound agreement. The respondents validated that, based on personal experience, you can learn from mistakes (failures) and use the knowledge obtained from the experience for the next endeavor no matter where your career path falls. Prosperous, mature and focused, the respondents added validation to the claim that failure or setbacks can open the door to success if used as a tool for learning. Whether you are a man or a woman, to successfully plot a course in life (whether it's career, financial, romantic or travel), a few things need to be done. Remember to discover where you are; decide where you want to be, how you prefer to get there, and when you would like to arrive. Have a basic route planned for each phase of the journey and write it down. Keep in mind that it is perfectly plausible to decide that you just want to explore the terrain and that your enjoyment springs from the discovery (McCarthy, 2001).

Conclusion

When you fail, don't give up. These people didn't: R.M. Macy failed seven times before his store in New York caught on. Novelist John Creasey got 753 rejection slips before he published the first of his 564 books. Thomas Edison was thrown out of school in the early grades when the teachers decided he could not do the work. Harry S. Truman failed as a haberdasher. When Bob Dylan performed for a high school talent show, his classmates booed him off the stage.
W. Clement Stone, successful insurance company executive and founder of Success magazine, was a high school dropout (Griffith, 2001).

This questionnaire was well received by a number of individuals. Evenly split with 25 male respondents and 25 female respondents, the questionnaire shed insight into the most common reaction to failure in the workplace. The resultant perceptions of the various age groups become enlightening. The participants in the study stood clear in relation to the themes that were under study and many gave written explanation. All of the questionnaires proved to have one profound conclusion and that was, all respondents answered, “yes” to the question, “Has a personal failure ever caused you to make changes?” The author considers that a revelation and it validates the author’s preconceived notion that failure can lead to successful undertakings. Here’s a most appropriate quote on the subject of trying,

“The only people who never fail, are those who never try”—Li Ka Chase.

There are so many examples of failure used to succeed that it would take the author volumes to document the opinions. Instead, here is another terrific quote that says it all,

Chapter IV
RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Analyzing Results of the Survey

A total of 50 individuals responded to the survey in a variety of ways, which included telephone, email, or personal interview. The respondents answered all ten statements in the survey and the responses were tallied. Each statement was based on a Likert two-point scale (page 57). The results were measured by calculating the total number of responses, times two, and then divided by 100 to calculate the percentage in relationship to each individual answer. There were an equal number of male respondents to female respondents (25 each). Three respondents were below 20 years of age; 12 respondents were between 21 and 30 years of age; ten respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age; 13 respondents were between 41 and 50 years of age; nine respondents were between 51 and 60 years of age; and three respondents were 60 years and above.

Statement 1: My initial tendency is to blame others when failure occurs.

A total of four respondents or eight percent strongly agreed "My initial tendency is to blame others when failure occurs." Thirteen respondents or 26 percent agreed with the statement; five respondents or ten percent took a neutral stance with the statement. Nineteen respondents or 38 percent disagreed, while nine respondents or 18 percent strongly disagreed.
Overall, the majority, 28 respondents, times two points for each question, or 56 percent, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their initial tendency was to blame others when failure occurred. Seventeen respondents, times two points for each question, or 34 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their initial tendency was to blame others when failure occurred. Ten percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part the result is that the majority disagrees or strongly disagrees with the statement that the initial tendency is to blame others when failure occurs, which can be translated into the respondent takes responsibility for their actions.

Statement 2: After taking the time to reflect on a job-related failure, I tend to be more accountable for my actions.

A total of 27 respondents or 54 percent strongly agreed that, “After taking the time to reflect on a job-related failure, I tend to be more accountable for my actions.” Fifteen respondents or 30 percent strongly agreed with the statement; seven respondents or 14 percent took a neutral stance with the statement, one respondent or two percent disagreed, while zero respondents or zero percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 42 respondents, times two points for each question, or 84 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, “After taking the time to reflect on a job-related failure, I tend to be more accountable for my actions.” The strong belief that the conclusion was split. One
respondent, or two percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and seven respondents or 14 percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, “After taking the time to reflect on a job-related failure, I tend to be more accountable for my actions.” This can be translated into the respondent takes responsibility for their actions.

Statement 3: Good interpersonal skills can lead to more constructive reactions to workplace failure.

A total of 30 respondents or 60 percent strongly agreed that, “Good interpersonal skills can lead to more constructive reactions to workplace failure.” Fifteen respondents or 30 percent agreed with the statement; two respondents or four percent took a neutral stance with the statement, two respondents or two percent disagreed, while one respondent or two percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 45 respondents, times two points for each question, or 90 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, “Good interpersonal skills can lead to more constructive reactions to workplace failure.” Three respondents, or six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and two respondents or four percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the
statement, "Good interpersonal skills can lead to more constructive reactions to workplace failure." Translated, the respondent believes acquired people skills help deal with workplace failure in a more constructive way.

Statement 4: The "wrong" working environment can easily hinder my success on the job.

A total of 20 respondents or 40 percent strongly agreed that, "The "wrong" working environment can easily hinder my success on the job." Seventeen respondents or 34 percent agreed with the statement; nine respondents or eighteen percent took a neutral stance with the statement, four respondents or eight percent disagreed, while zero respondents or zero percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 37 respondents, times two points for each question, or 74 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, "The "wrong" working environment can easily hinder my success on the job." Four respondents, or eight percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and nine respondents or eighteen percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, "The "wrong" working environment can easily hinder my success on the job." Translated, the respondent believes the "wrong" job or the "wrong" fit cause you to either be unsuccessful or slow your success in the workplace.
Statement 5: I believe that a lack of personal commitment can often lead to performance failure in the workplace.

A total of 23 respondents or 46 percent strongly agreed that, "I believe that a lack of personal commitment can often lead to performance failure in the workplace." Twenty-five respondents or 50 percent agreed with the statement; two respondents or four percent took a neutral stance with the statement, zero respondent or zero percent disagreed, while zero respondent or zero percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 48 respondents, times two points for each question, or 96 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, "I believe that a lack of personal commitment can often lead to performance failure in the workplace." No respondents, or zero percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and two respondents or four percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, "I believe that a lack of personal commitment can often lead to performance failure in the workplace." Translated, the respondent believes the lack of personal commitment leads to workplace failure.

Statement 6: Workplace failure can have a profound negative affect on personal self-esteem.

A total of 21 respondents or 42 percent strongly agreed that, "Workplace failure can have a profound negative affect on personal self-esteem." Twenty-
two respondents or 44 percent agreed with the statement; five respondents or ten percent took a neutral stance with the statement, two respondents or four percent disagreed, while zero respondents or zero percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 43 respondents, times two points for each question, or 86 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, "Workplace failure can have a profound negative effect on personal self-esteem." Two respondents, or four percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and five respondents or ten percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, "Workplace failure can have a profound negative effect on personal self-esteem." Translated, the respondent believes job failure can negatively affect your personal self-esteem.

Statement 7: Self-esteem can be eroded over time with workplace failure.

A total of 15 respondents or 30 percent strongly agreed that, "Self-esteem can be eroded over time with workplace failure." Twenty-eight respondents or 56 percent agreed with the statement; seven respondents or 14 percent took a neutral stance with the statement, zero respondents or zero percent disagreed, while zero respondents or zero percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 43 respondents, times two points for each question, or 86 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, "Self-esteem can be eroded over time with workplace failure." Zero respondents,
or zero percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and seven respondents or 14 percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, “Self-esteem can be eroded over time with workplace failure.” Translated, the respondent believes that continual job failure can erode your personal self-esteem.

Statement 8: In my opinion, fear of failure can lead to low motivation

A total of 11 respondents or 22 percent strongly agreed that, “In my opinion, fear of failure can lead to low motivation.” Twenty-two respondents or 44 percent agreed with the statement; four respondents or eight percent took a neutral stance with the statement, ten respondents or 20 percent disagreed, while three respondents or six percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 33 respondents, times two points for each question, or 66 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, “In my opinion, fear of failure can lead to low motivation.” Thirteen respondents, or 26 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and four respondents or eight percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, “In my opinion, fear of failure can lead to low motivation.” Translated, the respondents believe that lack of motivation could actually be due to having a fear of failing at a task. It is easier to not try, then to try and fail.
Statement 9: Overextending myself can lead to workplace failure and resultant stress.

A total of 12 respondents or 24 percent strongly agreed that, "Overextending myself can lead to workplace failure and resultant stress." Seventeen respondents or 34 percent agreed with the statement; 12 respondents or 24 percent took a neutral stance with the statement, eight respondents or 16 percent disagreed, while one respondent or two percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 29 respondents, times two points for each question, or 58 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, "Overextending myself can lead to workplace failure and resultant stress." Nine respondents, or 18 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and 12 respondents or 24 percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, "Overextending myself can lead to workplace failure and resultant stress." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that the respondents believe that continual overextension in the workplace can lead to stress related problems and burnout.

Statement 10: Fear of the unknown can limit my strategy in the workplace.

A total of six respondents or 12 percent strongly agreed that, "Fear of the unknown can limit my strategy in the workplace." Twenty respondents or 40 percent agreed with the statement; five respondents or ten percent took a neutral
stance with the statement, seventeen respondents or 34 percent disagreed, while two respondents or four percent strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority, 26 respondents, times two points for each question, or 52 percent of the subjects responded with either strongly agree or agree to, "Fear of the unknown can limit my strategy in the workplace." Nineteen respondents, or 38 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and five respondents or ten percent remained neutral. In light of these figures, based on the opinions and beliefs of the 50 respondents, for the most part, the result is that the majority agrees or strongly agrees with the statement, "Fear of the unknown can limit my strategy in the workplace." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that the respondents believe that if you have a fear of uncertainty, it can put a limit on your strategy or accomplishments in the workplace.

General Information Page Responses

Twenty-four females responded to the statement on the general information page, "Has a personal failure ever caused you to make changes?" Seventy-seven percent said, "Yes," and 25 percent said, "No." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that more than half of the female respondents found personal failure caused them to make a change. Of the 21 males who responded to the statement, "Has a failure ever caused you to make changes?" Eighty-two percent answered, "Yes," and 19 percent said, "No." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that more than half of the male respondents agreed that personal failure caused them to make a change.
Of the 24 females that responded to the statement, "Has a personal failure ever caused you to make changes?" Seventy-seven percent said, "Yes," and 25 percent said, "No." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that more than half of the female respondents found personal failure caused them to make a change. Of the 21 males who responded to the statement, "Has a failure ever caused you to make changes?" Eighty-two percent answered, "Yes," and 19 percent said, "No." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that more than half of the male respondents agreed that personal failure caused them to make a change.

Twenty-four females responded to the statement, "Have you ever considered failure as a new beginning?" Seventy-one percent said, "Yes," and 29 percent said, "No." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that more than half of the female respondents considered failure as a new beginning. Twenty-one males responded to the statement, "Have you ever considered failure as a new beginning?" Eighty-six percent answered, "Yes," and 14 percent said, "No." Based on the percentages, it can be concluded that more than half of the male respondents agreed that failure was considered a new beginning.

Qualitative Comments and Results

Respondents were asked to comment on open-ended questions by answering all, some, or none of the statements on the questionnaire. The answer statements are profound, personal and thorough. The captured candid comments are as follows; a female below the age of 20 explained that, "When a failure is present, I strive to reach my goals through a different mean. Failure
makes me evaluate myself and evaluate what I am doing wrong. Changes are made as a result of striving for personal/occupational satisfaction." There were no candid comments in this same male age category.

Female respondents in the age category of 21 to 30 when asked if failure ever produced a personal stepping-stone, answered, "I didn't get into law school, however, my failure at not getting into law school opened the door to getting my B.A. in something I really enjoy." Another stated, "I had failed a college course for an inexcusable reason, so I went back, took the same class, and the same professor, and got an "A."" Another stated, "I've gotten stronger from anything that didn't work for me. I have learned what will work better through knowing what did not work. To weed through the areas I didn't enjoy, I have been given a better view of where my areas of talent and enjoyment fall." Lastly, a female states, "Personal failure caused me to change my mindset and goals to better any situation." Two male respondents within the age group of 21 to 30, commented as follows: "When I fail at something, I try to go back and attend the task again until I figure out how to succeed. I like to adjust to prevent failure from happening again." The other male commented as follows, "I learn by my failures. I know I need a new and improved direction when personal failure occurs."

A female respondent in the 31 to 40 age category stated the following, "Watching the difference in promoting of two managers, one who took responsibility for failure/mistakes and one who did not, but looked for others to blame, educated me early on to the way to ascend in managerial ranks. Clearly responsibility for one's actions is always better received and rewarded. Personal
failure is called engineering design failure—if the design is less than optimal = failure, then you revisit and reformulate to prevent the mechanical failure from occurring again = success. There is an element of non-control in the workplace that can have a positive or negative effect on performance (i.e., administration budget costs or percentage of work force is out of one’s personal workplace control). However, if one remains properly focused, taking on responsibilities and control over those factors they can control, the chance of success is greatly improved. Further, if one knows they did the very best performance they can despite a given result, they have still experienced success.

Male respondents in the same 31 to 40 age category had the following comments, “Reflecting on past failures has motivated me to improve certain aspects of my life and work.” Another states, “Learning from past mistakes often reduces repetition. Work volume versus quality is a constantly adjusting factor. Past failure has an affect by limiting the amount of work a person may initiate.” Again, when asked if failure has created a stepping-stone, “Failure in life has made me respond to obstacles with even more conviction to succeed. Reflection on errors made has provided evidence for future decisions.” The last comment in this age category when asked if personal failure caused changes, “It caused me to correct mistakes of the past.”

Female respondents between the ages of 41 to 50 notably answered the open-ended questions on a more personal note. When asked if failure ever produced a stepping-stone, the following comments were noted. “I learned from my mistakes and hopefully will tackle a similar situation in a different and more
successful way. From failures, I realized I needed to change my approach in order to be successful. Once I didn’t get a job I wanted and so, therefore, I changed my interview approach and took the necessary steps for improvement in order to achieve my goals.” Another responds, “Not completing my undergraduate degree years ago has hindered my professional success. Promotions were given to others because I did not have my degree, but I gained the experience. Divorce, which caused me to take a closer look at myself and then refocus on my spiritual being caused me to make changes. The divorce helped me to become stronger and “much” more independent. I also learned to put my priorities in order and to love myself first before I could ever love someone else.” When asked if a personal failure caused changes, this female responded, “It led to employment changes with the workplace. The environment was more conducive to my personal growth and taught me what I do not want in a job placement.” On a more personal failure, this comment was made, “My stepping stones are more like a personal elevator—up and down. I have been on a diet for the last 20 (+) years—ever since I quit smoking. When I make my mind up to diet, I can do it—but I have to make up my mind to do it. Usually for an up-coming event, i.e., wedding, shower, class reunion. The reality is, I should do it for me. Based on diet failure, the most prevalent change would be in buying clothes that are a larger size instead of smaller. Every time I go on a diet, it is a new beginning with the hope that I stick with it, but it’s hard.”

Male respondents in the same 41 to 50 age category had this to say, “I believe that we must learn by our mistakes and make change so as not to do
them again." Another respondent states when asked if failure produced a personal stepping-stone, "It led to a great job change!"

A female respondent between the ages of 51 to 60 offered these comments when asked if failure produced a personal stepping-stone, "It provided me with more strength and the ability to move on. My divorce was an opportunity for me to make some life changes. These changes have affected my ability to increase my self-esteem, awareness, motivation and spirituality. I started a new beginning after a divorce." Male respondents in the same age category offered these comments, "I have been relatively fortunate that I have not experienced any major failures in my police career. I do think that one could learn from a failure and take the appropriate steps not to make the same mistakes that may have led to the failure." Another responded that a personal failure caused changes, "Following divorce, I realized that I must become more tolerant and understanding of other's views." Again, another respondent on the same question, "Over time, one tends to recognize and correct personality flaws." Lastly, when asked if failure caused changes, the response was, "Positive changes."

In the age category of 60 and above, the following female commented on failure as a personal stepping stone, "On personal relationships, I looked into myself, where I failed, and became strong and made better choices." Another female gave a totally different point of view stating that, "Success creates bigger and better stepping-stones. Failure or error, can teach you to take side steps and review how to "get the job done" at a fair level. I think the word "failure"
should not be used. I made an error in judgment. It can be corrected and I can move on and improve. I think of "failure" as failing exams. The word has a different connotation in the work place and should not be used. Errors in judgment have caused one to rethink a situation. I haven't failed at anything since I failed an exam at age eleven. Perhaps that is why I have schooled as a self-learner and educated myself. If I fail exams, they have to be retaken—that is not a new beginning. I don't believe in "personal failure"—more in disciplining oneself to attempt to get the job done no matter the circumstances and feel satisfied on completion.” A male respondent in the same age category considered failure as a personal stepping-stone because, “I vowed to overcome the failure with hard work and motivation.”

Conclusion

This survey was well received by the polled individuals. The respondents spoke the words, “interesting concept,” or “enjoyed the topic,” on several occasions. Individuals participating in this study related to the theme presented in the survey through some type of personal experience.

The author concludes, based on the survey, women tend to be very descriptive in the narrative process and men tend to use short, to the point, sentences. Men and women basically view the world in different ways. Both have distinct viewpoints and attitudes toward life, think differently, and, therefore, do not have the same notions of what is essential, but seem to agree that failure can produce stepping-stones to success. On interview, personality is reflected in
conversation, use of language and worldviews, which result in gender specific ways to communicate.

The survey results for question one, "My initial tendency is to blame others when failure occurs," demonstrates that individuals do presume blame for their mistakes. Questions two through ten clearly demonstrate that failure, whether personal or job related, can be used as a learning tool but can also psychologically distress the self-esteem image. It is how this distress is channeled that turns a so-called failure into a learning tool for success.
Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The new definition of success held by 53 percent of Americans in a new nationwide poll conducted by the Roper Organization found an increased emphasis on relationships and personal growth. The top three factors in being successful are a happy family life (65 percent), having enough time for family and friends (63 percent) and being in control of one's life (57 percent) (Pagano, 2001). Realignment and redefining success can be based on using past failures as stepping-stones. It is about creating a more balanced existence between work and family life. The author believes that today's work force is thrust into rewriting the success script and living it. Today's workplace individuals are contributing to a renaissance.

In conducting the survey process, the author found that male respondents proved harder to gather for filling out the questionnaire and were more reluctant to answer the “survey,” but once captured, were just as likely, if not as likely to answer all questions and add to the open-ended questions. Female respondents were more reluctant to circle the age category on the survey, validating the author's pre-determined notion that women hate to reveal their age. One analysis found was the respondents had positive insight into what constituted failure, based on personal experiences, and a corrective action plan was implemented. This is the first step in analyzing how to reach the road to success.
The survey not only "sparked" the author, but it "sparked" a revelation in the respondents as well. Comments provoked individual thought processes. Respondents clearly took time to read the questionnaire and write down very personal conclusions. Respondents voiced positive opinions to the author during the collection process. As with any survey, there were differences of opinion, but one concluding factor found was that respondents strongly agreed or agreed with many of the statements. According to Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, almost all literature in the first 150 years or so focused on what could be called the *Character Ethic* as the foundation of success. This would include things like integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty and the Golden Rule. The *Character Ethic* taught that there are basic principles of effective living and people can only experience true success and enduring happiness as they learn and integrate these principles into their basic character (Covey, p18, 1990). The respondents, perhaps without knowing, tapped into these ethic characteristics when they answered the survey.

Failure is a mindset that can be rectified through positive thinking (the world according to the author). The first step is to recognize the failure (mistake, breakdown, disappointment or closure). The next step is to analyze it. How did it occur? Did it happen before? How can you prevent it from happening again? These are questions to ask of yourself. Next, the reason for the failure must be re-thought and re-directed. How can this mishap be restructured to benefit the situation? Can it be used as a learning tool or process? Think positively and
share the findings with someone you trust. A peer analysis can add insight into your own shortcomings. Sometimes the closer you are, the more blinded or myopic you can be. Here's an appropriate statement from Helen Keller, "Do not think of today's failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow."

Sometimes even the smallest dreams can have a profound impact. You don't have to find a cure for cancer or a way to end poverty worldwide to make a significant difference in the quality of your life, your family, and the world around you. The power and influence of one person who decides to take control of his or her life and strive for personal success is far reaching (Peel, 2000).

If you have dreams about personal success in business, and especially when you see your dreams becoming reality, you can expect criticism. Don't let this stop you. The risks and costs of gaining the life you want and becoming the person you want to be, are far less than the long-range risks and costs of settling for a less than optimum life. Tennessee Williams once said, “All cruel people describe themselves as paragons of frankness!” In other words, sometimes blunt truth hurts. Don't let that stop you from accomplishing your goals. Instead, learn by the comments and turn the tables around. You don't need to justify your actions, but you do need to know who the competition is. The two common reasons for losing are not knowing you're competing in the first place, and not knowing with whom you are competing. You don't need to justify your reason for trying harder to succeed. Daring ideas and discoveries are often made by not following instructions and by going off the main road and trying the untried.
Crazy ideas are sometimes hard to accept. In 1829, Martin Van Buren, then governor of New York, wrote to the President:

"The canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as "railroads." ... As you may well know, railroad carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by engines, which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed (Simmons, 2001)."

Can you imagine if no one took the chance to build a railroad? Chances have to be taken in order to experience the unknown. If you have never been scared or embarrassed or hurt, it means you have never taken chances. There comes a time when you need to affirm the truth about yourself to help spark ideas of your own. You have to tell yourself that you are a uniquely gifted and valuable person who is tenacious and self-disciplined. When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt. The best response to a critic or cynic is to let your progress and success speak for you.

To be successful in today's workplace, the administration, staff members, factory workers, etc., all need to be conscious of basic surroundings. Work success is not just about position and money or monetary gain anymore, but rather it is self-fulfillment, self-esteem, strong character and motivation toward a successful self-analysis. Failure is just a word used to express a set-back. Don't live by it or fall on it. Instead, use it as a motivational tool to learn and survive by. When something goes wrong in your department, do you blame others for what
may have really been your fault? You might have the tendency to do this at some point or another. Accepting blame, however, gives you control over your life and your business. The survey results proved that most people do accept blame for themselves when things go wrong.

In the novel, *Green Hills of Africa*, Ernest Hemingway recalls how he missed an easy shot at a prized sable bull. He could have easily blamed it on his guide who surprised the animal, but he didn't. He concludes, "Every damn thing is your own fault, if you're any good." To be successful, you must accept total responsibility for everything. If you don't, you'll always find excuses that keep you from achieving what you really want. Remember that the atmosphere you create, both internally and externally, contributes to your success or failure. Mark Twain said, "You can't break a bad habit by throwing it out the window. You've got to walk it slowly down the stairs."

**Conclusion**

Can failure be used to succeed in the workplace? Can you rebuild for success? The first thing you have to do is to remove any obstacles in your path. When something stands in your way that hinders your goal, dissolve the problem. Visualize a clear path in your mind and then operate on creativity. Jot down your ideas and save them, as you never know when an opportunity might occur. Take a risk and do something different. That first step you take can be the one that leads to stepping-stones toward success. Start moving by passing go and continue to move until you are personally satisfied. Learn to close the door of
your mind on all failures from your past but use the experiences as learning tools. Clear your mind of any influence, which does not support a positive mental attitude. Find out what you want most in life, and go after it. Don't be afraid to try, don't fear failure and don't fear success. Instead, make success your compassion, learn from your failures (mistakes, set-backs) and go forward with a new attitude, more aware of your surroundings, and much more sure of your direction. One of the most powerful forces in business today is the positive psychology movement—overcoming self-defeating attitudes and developing your talents and positive traits.

How do you build to succeed? First of all, you have to know what you want. This may sound elementary, but it is the most important step. If you know what you want, you can drive toward the goal and no set-back, failure, or negative mindset can stop you from achieving your accomplishments if you have focus. Having focus and clear goals can enhance your pride, self-satisfaction and self-confidence. So, here again is psychological and emotional support. To succeed in the workplace, you have to break any bad work habits, the first being distracted by outside influences. Empty your mind of all nonessentials such as worry, concerns and other trivial annoyances. Never worry until it's time to worry. Don't let anyone sway you from your vision. What might seem like a "crazy" idea to someone else, could be the one break that you need to become a success. Never lose sight of your focus or the big picture. If you choose your battles wisely, you will win the war, conquer and succeed.
Can failure help you rebuild for success? The author concludes, “yes.” By being objective and using rational thinking, you will more likely see results in your ability to deal effectively with tough situations and difficult people in both business and personal areas. Ultimately, this will make you a success in business and content in your personal life. The author will leave you with this one last thought, a fantastic quote by George R. Fitzpatrick:

“Nature gave man two ends—one to sit on and one to think with. Ever since, man’s success has been dependent on the one he uses most.”

Don’t let your success slide by because you were too busy licking your wounds and sitting on the sideline. Stand up, focus your emotions and take that first step. It’s never too late to fall off the horse, as long as you get back on and take it to the finish line!


Ibid. (Unknown). Quote.


Appendix A

Survey
USING FAILURE TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKPLACE
Rebuilding for Success

Overview: The basis of this survey is to determine whether failure in personal and business aspects of one’s life could create stepping-stones that lead to success in business. We often have a fear of failure, but could that fear be overcome if failure were used as a learning tool?

Objective: This questionnaire will be used to determine your candid assessment of the topic of whether you believe that personal or business setbacks, which almost always occur at some time or another, could be used to rebuild and lead to future success in the workplace.

This research is being done as part of the thesis to earn a Masters Degree in Corporate and Public Communication. It will take less than ten minutes to answer. Please read the statement and circle the number closest to your personal feeling. Results will be handled confidentially and tabulated in an anonymous form. All original forms will be destroyed.

If you would like a copy of the results, please feel free to contact me or attend my thesis presentation in May of 2002 at Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, New Jersey 07079.
Survey Statement: An overview evaluation of the most common reasons for failure in the workplace and resultant reactions and perceptions, which lead to success.

Procedural Guidelines: Interview 25 to 50 individuals who have experienced some type of failure in the past five years whether in business, personal or social areas.

Please circle the answer of your choice on the basis of your own experience.

Key:
SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
N = Neutral
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

1. My initial tendency is to blame others when failure occurs.  
2. After taking the time to reflect on a job-related failure, I tend to be more accountable for my actions.  
3. Good interpersonal skills can lead to more constructive reactions to workplace failure. 
4. The “wrong” working environment can easily hinder my success on the job.  
5. I believe that a lack of personal commitment can often lead to performance failure in the workplace.  
6. Workplace failure can have a profound negative affect on personal self-esteem.  
7. Self-esteem can be eroded over time with workplace failure.  
8. In my opinion, fear of failure can lead to low motivation.  
9. Overextending myself can lead to workplace failure and resultant stress.  
10. Fear of the unknown can limit my strategy in the workplace.

Comments: Please provide additional comments based on personal situations regarding the above.
General Information

Please answer all, some or none of the following questions:

1. Please circle your gender: Male Female

2. Please circle your age group:
   - Below 20
   - 21-30
   - 31-40
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 60 & above

3. Has failure ever produced a personal stepping-stone for you? Yes No
   Please explain:
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

4. Has a personal failure ever caused you to make changes? Yes No
   Please explain:
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

5. Have you ever considered failure as a new beginning? Yes No

Thank you for your time and candid comments.
Appendix B

Analysis of the Survey
Survey Results: Table of Percentages

These results are based on a two-point Likert Scale. Fifty respondents, 25 male and 25 female, answered all ten questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<td></td>
<td>4/20×2=8 8%</td>
<td>13/20×2=26 26%</td>
<td>5×2=10 10%</td>
<td>19/2×2×2=38 38%</td>
<td>9×2=18 18%</td>
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<td>15/20×2=30 30%</td>
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<td>15/2×2×2=30 30%</td>
<td>2×2=4 4%</td>
<td>2×2=4 4%</td>
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<td>25/2×2×2=50 50%</td>
<td>2×2=4 4%</td>
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<td>0×2=0 0%</td>
<td>96% Agree or Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
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<td>22/2×2×2=44 44%</td>
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<td>2×2=4 4%</td>
<td>0×2=0 0%</td>
<td>88% Strongly Agree or Agree</td>
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<td>7×2=14 14%</td>
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<td>0×2=0 0%</td>
<td>88% Agree or Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>3×2=8 6%</td>
<td>68% Agree or Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #9</td>
<td>12/2×2=24 24%</td>
<td>17/2×2×2=34 34%</td>
<td>12×2=24 24%</td>
<td>8×2=16 16%</td>
<td>1×2=2 2%</td>
<td>58% Agree or Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #10</td>
<td>6/2×2=12 12%</td>
<td>20/2×2×2=40 40%</td>
<td>5×2=10 10%</td>
<td>17×2=34 34%</td>
<td>2×2=4 4%</td>
<td>52% Agree or Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>