

10 TIPS FOR OVERCOMING FAILURE AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

01

ANYTHING URGENT?

Is there an immediate step you can take to address the mistake? Is there someone you need to inform? Most mistakes seem to get worse if not addressed as soon as possible, so seeking help and advice on what to do next is important.



02

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

Failure can cause very strong emotions such as anger and shame. If unexpected, or unusual it can also come as a significant shock.



03

TAKE A PAUSE

Pausing to acknowledge any difficult emotions caused by failure and gain clarity can prevent unconsidered, unhelpful behaviours, decisions and actions. For example, giving up or being rude to someone trying to help you.



04

RECOGNISE A FAILURE GRADIENT

All failures evoke strong negative emotions, making it difficult to separate serious failures from inconsequential ones. Recognising a failure gradient from 'doesn't matter' to 'catastrophic' can help you keep a sense of perspective, think logically about the failure and make a sensible plan to recover.



05

LEARN WHAT YOU CAN

There may be nothing to learn, for example, if the failure was caused by things outside your control. There may be both known and unknown factors, making it hard to know what exactly happened. Despite this, it is worth considering any failure in the context of the surrounding circumstances to try to identify any contributing factors.



06

REFRAME THE FAILURE

Adjusting your attitude to see failure as useful can lead to greater resilience, wellbeing and better mental health. Try to see failure as a chance to improve, or to increase your resilience or to experience the difficult emotional responses necessary for personal growth.



07

YOU ARE NOT YOUR FAILURE

Anyone can have a bad day, and everyone fails every now and again. But you can change any of your actions that led to the failure. Plus, you can still take responsibility for any failures, but it is important to acknowledge the causes of failures and avoid thinking that there is something intrinsic in you that invites failure.



08

SHARE, DO NOT COMPARE

Constantly comparing ourselves with others we consider more successful is linked to poor mental health, including lack of motivation and confidence. Conversely, sharing feelings about failure can be very powerful. Sharing with someone trustworthy often brings in a sense of perspective and prevents isolation. Sharing is particularly powerful if done with someone who understands what you are going through, like a colleague.



09

MAKE A FLEXIBLE PLAN

It is important to create a workable action plan and to be prepared to amend it depending on future circumstances. The plan you make will depend on the type of failure you have experienced and your end goal. Try and think through all your possible options and sources of help. Be honest with yourself-what will make next time different from this time?Alternatively, you may decide to change your end goal. Can you meet your ultimate objectives in a different way?



10

FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

To be resilient, individuals need a supportive community and to feel a sense of belonging. You may be lucky and find a ready-made community with people you trust where you feel you belong. But if you do not currently feel that you are part of such a community there is nothing to stop you finding one, or even building your own. This will hopefully enable you to follow tip 08 and open up about your feelings and failures as well as providing you with more potential sources of help.



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