

FAILING *forward*

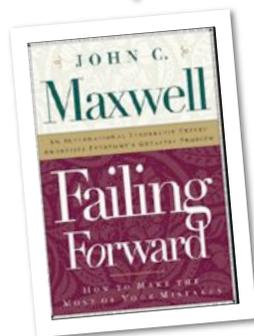
By John Maxwell

TURNING MISTAKES INTO STEPPING STONES FOR SUCCESS

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“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”



“To succeed, you have to be open to problems. You have to be open to failure. And as you go up the ladder, you gain the right to get more problems.”

John Maxwell can teach you to have

Relationships - One of the most important aspects of success is how you get along with others.

Equipping - You will not get anywhere near true success without a team

Attitude - Your everyday life depends on your attitude. It will determine how far you go.

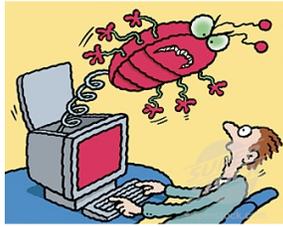
Leadership - Your effectiveness relies on your best leadership qualities.

Success.

John Maxwell outlines numerous examples that show how perceiving and responding to failure determines whether you will be an average or an achieving person. The advice he gives on how to take our mistakes and failures and turn them into learning opportunities is simple and down to earth. Maxwell’s *Failing Forward* is a 15-step method to achieving success through and with failure. Throughout the book, John use numerous well-known people who have failed in order to succeed as examples and inspiration to any reader. No matter what problems are faced, John is able to use humor to point out just how common failures are and to teach basic principles that anyone can follow to overcome any failure. The point throughout his book is to change you and your attitude which will in turn help you *beat* failure, and move forward, turning it into success.

Realize the difference between average people and achieving people.

For thought: How do you describe your approach to failure? Are you willing to change what you believe?



Some Old Attitudes:

Fear of failure: for lack of ever having failed.

Misunderstanding failure: as a single event rather than a process.

Unprepared for failure: not allowing yourself to accept the possibility of failure.

“We are all failures - at least, all the best of us are.” - J.M. Barrie

New Course:

Learning how to fail and then move passed failure, and accepting that you will have problems to deal with rather than any problems at all will determine whether you FAIL FORWARD or backward.

A New Face on Obstacles:

Problems along the way are problems that you allow yourself to have.

Trouble:

Pushing yourself forward through obstacles and hardships only makes you stronger. You FAIL FORWARD

The Impossible Question:

If failure did not exist, what would you try to achieve. According to John Maxwell, this is a bad question. The mere consideration that any achievement could exist without failure gives a wrong impression of failure. The question needing to be answered is, what would we try to achieve if how we looked at and responded to failure was different?

Redefining Failure and Success

Step 2

Learn a new definition of failure.

For thought: How many mistakes do you allow yourself? When do you decide to do something about it? Do you just quit trying?

Failure is not...

Avoidable: Everybody makes mistakes because they are human. You learn lessons when they are repeated. Lessons can be difficult. Once you learn a lesson, you change how you act.

An event: Failure is not an isolated event, it is a process. If you are living and breathing, you can continue to fail.

Objective: You decide what is failure for you. How you respond to mistakes will determine your failure.

The enemy: You can't change your mistakes, but by keeping things in perspective you can avoid the problems associated. Take the failure in stride.

A stigma: Making mistakes gets you closer to success. Don't allow mistakes to slow you down, but instead serve as a learning opportunity.

Final: Failure should not keep you from moving forward. When we seek out positive outcomes from our mistakes we are on our way to success.

“Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” - Thomas Edison

Genius

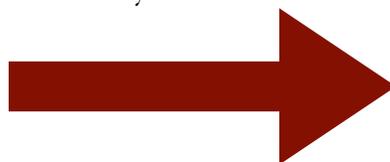
Successful Entrepreneur

Fool

Looks Like a Fool

Afraid of Being a Fool

STEPS TO SUCCESS



Remove the "you" from failure.

For thought: Do you believe you are a failure? What do you tell yourself when you have failed at something? Are you a perfectionist? How can you think more realistically?

Remind yourself that failing at doing something does not make you a failure. Successful people have all failed at doing something but have never considered themselves failures. Having a false self-esteem will not help to fail forward either. It is difficult but possible to maintain a positive attitude under any circumstances.

Tell yourself, "I'm not a failure. I failed at doing something." There's a big difference." - Erma Bombeck

Abilities Needed to Fail Forward

- 1. **Reject Rejection:** Don't blame yourself, just take responsibility for your actions.
- 2. **See Failure as Temporary:** Personalizing failure can cause you to get stuck. As an achiever, you will see problems as momentary events.
- 3. **See Failure as Isolated:** Failing is not a lifelong event. Smile because you can't win them all.
- 4. **Keep Expectations Realistic:** You have to mentally prepare for each obstacle you face. Each requires a unique expectation. Don't give up.
- 5. **Focus on Strengths:** Concentrate always on what you can do and where you are successful.
- 6. **Vary Approaches to Achievement:** Don't be shy about trying new approaches to problems, and don't allow others to make you feel like a failure.
- 6. **Bounce Back:** You can't take making mistakes personally. Learn from them and move forward.

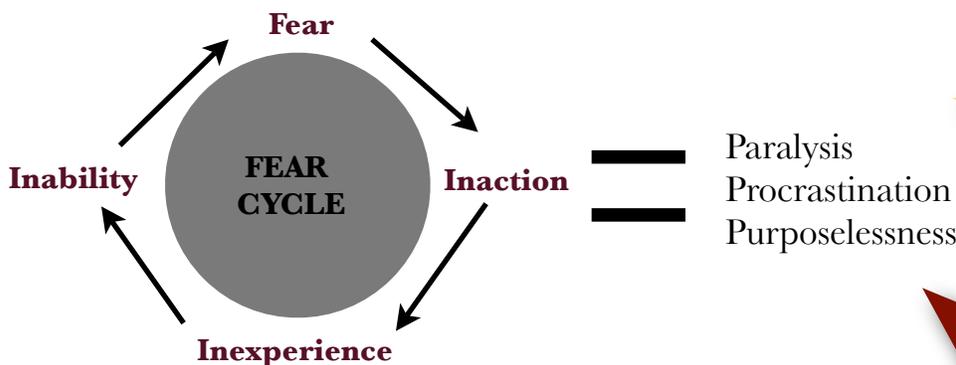
Step 4

Take action and reduce your fear.

For thought: What are you afraid of? What do you do to face those fears?

Failure can be painful, but you must remember that **YOUR FAILURE DOES NOT MAKE YOU A FAILURE.** Don't get stuck in the fear of failure cycle.

"Fear makes come true that which one is afraid of." - Victor Frankl



You must come to the realization that much of your life is spent making mistakes. After inaction, getting started can be hard to do. Once started, it gets easier. By making mistakes, you are making progress.

Change your response to failure by accepting responsibility

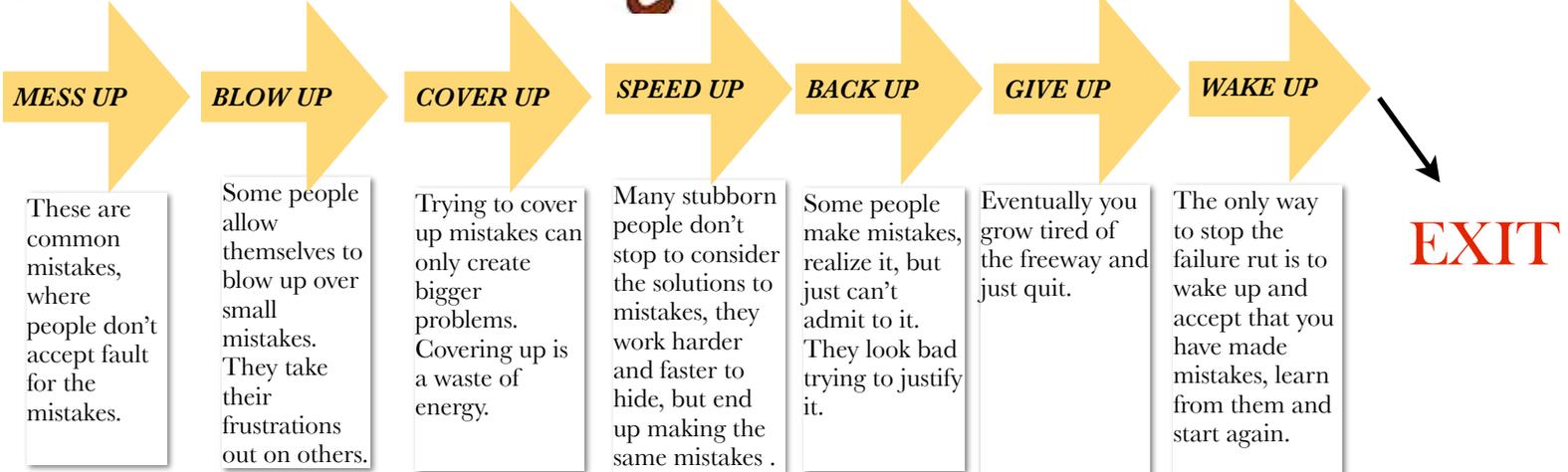
For thought: How often do you rely on doing the "same old, same old" to solve problems that keep coming back?

Don't let failure make a monkey out of you.
It's easy to get stuck in a rut doing the same things over and over while never getting the results that you want.



"Ninety percent of all those who fail are not actually defeated. They simply quit." - Paul. J. Meyer

GET OFF THE FAILURE FREEWAY!



Do you Mind Changing your Mind.

Step 6

Don't let the failure from outside get inside you.

For thought: How do you control the problems beyond your control? How do you handle frustration?

Accepting responsibility for you own problems and failures will enable you to fail forward. Sometimes the problems you face are beyond your control but you still need to take control of what happens within you. You cannot control everything that comes your way, but instead, you can control how you deal with it. It's all in the attitude.

Pessimists tell us that if something bad can happen, it will.

John Maxwell asks: *"Is the law of human behavior optimistic or pessimistic?"*

Your answer can tell you what kind of attitude you have.

"A problem is something that can be solved. a fact of life is something that must be accepted."



POSITIVE ATTITUDE

To become a more optimistic person you must first learn to be content no matter what. Contentment is a key to fighting failure.

REMEMBER

Stuffing your emotions will not make them disappear. You could hurt yourself. Settling with where you are, even if it is in a bad situation, will not make you content. Work your way out. Contentment does not come from power.



POSITIVE ACTION

You cannot fail forward without acting on the positive attitude. You must focus your attitude and your actions on the problems that you can solve.



Focusing on facts of life beyond your control can cause trouble. Accept it. Stay busy controlling that which depends on you. Failure can only happen inside of you, don't let it in.

Say good-bye to yesterday.

For thought: How much old "baggage" are you carrying around that could be weighing and slowing you down from reaching any success?

If you cannot get over past failures you are carrying a load too heavy to handle, which makes moving forward very difficult. Don't let negative experiences pave your road in life. Even the most tragic experiences should not stop you from seeking a positive, productive and full life. Your past problems can make you **BREAKDOWN** or **BREAKTHROUGH**

"One reason God created time was so that there would be a place to bury the failures of the past." - James Long

BREAKDOWN

Comparison:

Living up to the Joneses is harder than bringing them down to you.

Rationalization:

Making excuses keeps you from finding solutions.

Isolation:

You will make yourself miserable by withdrawing.

Regret:

You are the only one who can stop feeling regretful.

Bitterness:

Dwelling on the past can stir up bitterness. Remind yourself that it could be worse.

BREAKTHROUGH

Acknowledge the pain.

Grieve the loss.

Forgive the person.

Forgive yourself.

Determine to release the event and move on.



"Talk to God about the issue and ask Him to help you through the process."

Step 8

Change yourself, and your world changes.

For thought: What are your weaknesses and strengths? How do others perceive your weaknesses and strengths?

You can change many things, but until you change yourself, the problems don't go away. Admitting the need for change can change a whole attitude and life. To admit this need, you must get to know your own strengths and weaknesses. Don't allow your weaknesses to make you quit. Use your strengths to push you forward or sideways.

"Failure is the greatest opportunity I have to know who I really am." - John Killinger

Moving forward/sideways

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2

3

4

See yourself clearly

Admit your flaws honestly

Discover your strengths joyfully

Build on those strengths passionately

Get to know and accept the good and the bad about yourself.

You must get to know your limits in your skills, your talents and your character.

To get better at something, you must work hard at what it is you are good at.

You have to have heart. Dedicate yourself to improving. This is changing yourself.

Get over yourself and start giving yourself.

For thought: Do you dream of failing? Do you make room for adversities?

Stop thinking of only yourself - it makes you fail

Stop focusing on only you - it makes you feel insecure, inferior, inadequate, and insignificant

Stop taking yourself too seriously - it makes you intense



Start putting the team first - you can't win at a game if you don't get over yourself.

Start adding value to others - this shows where your mind, heart and actions are. This means listening, observing and valuing others. This means giving your best without expecting anything in return. This means meeting their needs before your own.

Don't get stuck inside your own ego, because it will become a prison in no time flat." - Barbara Ward

Embracing Failure as a Friend

Step 10

Find the benefit in every bad experience.

For thought: Have you considered anything worse than your problems? What is worse?

learning & succeeding = failing a lot!

failing a lot = struggling through adversity

embracing adversity = moving forward

"A failure is a man who blundered, but is not able to cash in on the experience." - Elbert Hubbard

ADVERSITY CAN...

★ **Create Resilience** by making you stronger and more ready for any new adversities.

★ **Push the Envelope of Performance.** The more you fall and get back up, the more risky you become.

★ **Develop Maturity** by giving you more experience. With experience, you gain wisdom and maturity.

★ **Provide Greater Opportunities.** For every problem a new door of unknown opportunity open.

★ **Prompt Innovation.** To be successful you must be creative, innovation comes out of creativity.

★ **Motivate** by allowing you to step back and look for the benefits that rise out of surviving a challenge.

★ **Recap Unexpected Benefits.** Sometimes mistakes turn out to be happy mistakes.

If at first you do succeed, try something harder.

For thought: How do you plan for risks in your life? Are you willing to "push the envelope"? What's keeping you?

To FAIL FORWARD you have to take risks. A risk is measured by the value of the goal it seeks and not by the fear that it generates.

To Avoid Risks:

- Don't drive an automobile.
- Don't travel by air, rail, or water.
- Don't walk on the street.
- Don't stay home.



"We've considered every potential risk except the one of avoiding all risks"

"While one person hesitates because he feels inferior, the other is busy making mistakes and becoming superior." - Henry C. Link

Traps that Prevent Risk Taking:

Embarrassment - It doesn't matter what others think! No matter how often you fall down, pick yourself up and keep moving forward.

Rationalization - Second-guessing what you do just discredits the need to do it. It is no longer anything important. You will regret more if you don't take risks than if you take risks and fail.

Fairness - It doesn't matter what others think! No matter how often you fall down, pick yourself up and keep moving forward.

Timing - There are no right times to do everything and if you wait for the right time, it never happens. Procrastination is a poor excuse.

Inspiration - You have to act on your inspirations quickly or you never will. Professionals don't wait for inspiration to take greater risks.

Step 12

Learn from a bad experience and make it a good experience

For thought: Are you truly conscious of the lessons that you're learning? What do you learn from your mistakes?

It doesn't matter how much you know, you will make mistakes. To move forward you must learn to make failing your best friend and learn from it.

"Adversity is the first path to truth." - Lord Byron

Learning from your Mistakes

John Maxwell ask you to ask yourself:

What caused the failure? Understanding what went wrong will help you sort things out. This is a good start to the learning process.

Was it truly a failure? You must make sure that your expectations are realistic. You cannot fail with unrealistic goals, but you can miss.

What are the successes? You have to be willing to look for the good that comes from failure. It's there, but sometimes hard to find.

What can I learn from what happened? Keep an attitude where you can learn anything and improve upon it.

Am I grateful for the experience? Don't be a poor sport. Learn to accept defeats and appreciate the chance to be able to learn.

How can I turn this into a success? As long as you try, you will learn something from the process.

Who can help me? Take advice from those who have failed often. They are the experts.

Work on the weakness that weakens you.

For thought: Who do you consider your allies for working out problems? Are you willing to let others in on your success journey?

Reasons People Fail

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1. Poor people skills: The most important skill needed for success is getting along with others and knowing how to get along with others. This skill carries you far through all the other skills.

2. Negative attitude: You need to always look on the positive side of things, keep a positive attitude, and make the best of every situation.

3. Bad fit: You have to consider making changes in your career if the poor fit is making you frustrated.

4. Lack of focus: You can make some very serious mistakes if you aren't focussed on what you really should be doing. Your time and energy will be wasted if you don't prioritize.

5. Weak commitment: As long as you stay committed to something you will succeed at it. No matter how long it takes, you will fail forward and eventually reach your goals.

6. Unwillingness to change: When you can't seem to change, you are at odds with your worst enemy. Resisting change is natural but you shouldn't stop you. You must learn to be flexible.

“Lord, deliver me from the man who never makes a mistake, and also from the man who makes the same mistake twice.” - Dr. William Mayo

7. Short-cut mind set: If you cut too many corners, the road you pave to success will fall apart quickly. Remind yourself to persevere and suffer out the adversities. That is the process to success.

8. Relying on talent alone: You can't rely too much on your talents. You must always look at improving and making the most of what you can do.

9. Response to poor information: Get the facts, and get them right or you will make the wrong decisions.

10. No Goals: Understanding your weaknesses and starting to do something about them will give you the drive and desire for success.

Find what's holding you back and work it!

Step 14

Understand that there's not much difference between

failure and success.

For thought: why do you desire to fulfill your dreams?

The Power of



To FAIL FORWARD you must develop persistence. You must learn to finish what you start even if you don't like it. Just prepare yourself for any problems to come. This is all part of the success. This is how you become more persistent. John Maxwell gives a 4-point plan that will empower your persistence.

“There is no failure except no loner trying. There is no defeat except from within, no really insurmountable barrier save our own inherent weakness of purpose.” - Ken Hubbard

1. PURPOSE
You need to find a purpose when you are dealing with a problem. That's what will keep you moving forward. It is the power to persistence. It helps to have a vision of where you are going.

2. EXCUSES
You need to get rid of any excuses and take responsibility for yourself. John Maxwell says, “bit the bullet...keep trying.”

3. INCENTIVES
You need to develop incentives that match your goal. If you over reward yourself for small reasons, you will lose the will to keep moving forward.

4. DETERMINATION
You need to establish a determined mind set. The rewards by far outweigh the failures you have along the way. You will develop a resilience to failure.

Get up, get over it, get going.

For thought: Are you really willing to get over the past? What is helping or not helping you?

Once you've developed the persistence to move forward and the resilience to pick yourself up after every fall, you still have to have a plan that will keep you from getting tired of the game. You have to move FORWARD.

"Experience is not what happens to you. Experience is what you do with what happens to you." - Aldous Huxley

Finalize your goal. Failures cannot become successes if you are not sure of what it is you want. Fail at something you want. Anything unwanted is a waste.

Order your plans. Even though a plan may not pan out the way you wanted it to, a plan is better than no plan at all. Your chances of success drop dramatically.

Risk failing with action. Your plan is useless without any action. Once in action, you are taking risks. Without risks you cannot fail, without failure, you cannot make progress.

Welcome mistakes. This is a fact of life, accept it and embrace it. Make it your best friend.

FAILING **A**dvance based on character. Your character will be your one and only drive forward when it seems so much easier to give up and throw in the towel.

Regulate your progress. A constant review of a project will steadily uncover mistakes which are learning opportunities. Don't wait until it's too late.

Develop new strategies. To win, you must be ready for change. When all else fails, get up and start all over again.

Critique

John Maxwell has a fantastic way of getting through to people with his use of humor. Laughter is always the best medicine and what better way to overcome mistakes than to laugh at them. His 15 step program is very practical in how it deals with everyday situations. Often people assume that they are successful because they have not experienced much in the way of failure, John's reflections and questions help a reader to realize how thinking that there is success without failure unhealthy and pushing us closer to actual failure. It is very humbling to hear other stories, even from very famous individuals, of the kinds of stupid mistakes that they have made. It is exciting to discover that because of mistakes, those individuals have become famously successful. At no point in his book does John make the reader feel that only famous people can succeed, or that the mistakes that are made are very trivial. Instead he gives thought provoking questions at every step of the way to get the reader to consider what their attitude is about failure.

Although John's book does not address educational success and failure or the attitudes of educators, the suggestions he makes can easily be applied to any occupation. Each step that he leads you through offers an opportunity to reflect on how you see and face daily challenges. Without a doubt, educators deal with adversities sometimes several times a day. Without even facing any particular challenge at the moment, a reader will change their attitude on what they see as failure and success. Educators in particular can use these steps not only to constantly review their successes, but to help children and other adults realize how, by having failures and making mistakes, they are making progress.

Learning to fail as an opportunity to learn is a seemingly complex concept turned very simply in *Failing Forward*. Presenting his ideas in a step by step manner allows a person to feel like they are making some progress while they are feeling like a failure. John does remind his readers that there is nothing easy about changing our attitudes, and behaviors when dealing with failure, but as long as we take the time to consider the need for changes, we have already begun to move FORWARD toward success.

Rubric for Executive Book Summary Assignment

(attach to hard copy of executive book review when submitted to professor)

Student Name: Deanna Poitras

Title of Book: Failing Forward

Author: John Maxwell

SELF ASSESSMENT **E-EX**

INSTRUCTOR ASSESSMENT ____

The following items are rated according to the symbols I=Inadequate; A=Adequate; V=Very Well Done; E=Excellent; and EX=Exceptional

	<u>I</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>EX</u>
Visually attractive presentation of book summary	I	A	V	E	EX
Clear depiction of author's aims and perspectives	I	A	V	E	EX
Original summary of book (>100 words)	I	A	V	E	EX
Annotated presentation of content and structure	I	A	V	E	EX
Significant quotes and concepts highlighted	I	A	V	E	EX
Critical evaluation of the book (>200 words)	I	A	V	E	EX
Point form summary-annotation of key concepts	I	A	V	E	EX
Purposeful use of visuals to convey meaning	I	A	V	E	EX
Effective use of tables, diagrams and/or figures	I	A	V	E	EX
Application to theory and/or practice	I	A	V	E	EX
Thought provoking discussion questions for readers	I	A	V	E	EX
Logical organization of contents	I	A	V	E	EX
Accuracy and clarity of statements/representation	I	A	V	E	EX
Written presentation:					
Literary Style	I	A	V	E	EX
Spelling/Grammar (proofreading)	I	A	V	E	EX
Neatness - Quality of copy	I	A	V	E	EX
Readability - Desktop publishing quality	I	A	V	E	EX
Copies given to other course participants	Yes	No			
Suitability to give to professional staff	Yes	No			
Submitted electronic copy (attachment)	Yes	No			

(Use MS Publisher - Available in Education Labs and/or with MS Office Professional)

GRADE OR MARK:

COMMENTS (and other features not indicated above):