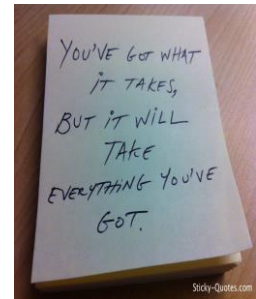


How to Use Failure (Potential Failure) As A Step To Success

1. Anticipate Failure As a Potential Outcome
2. Identify/Adapt to the Potential of Failure
3. Work From the Bottom Up *and* Cover Your Bases
4. Have A Plan ... *but* Improvise Along The Way



5. Don't Jettison Your Plan To soon
6. Pitfalls
 - * Procrastination
 - * Anxiety
 - * Lack of Confidence
 - * Perfectionism
 - * 1957: the past was good, but don't live there!



8. Know When To Throw In The Towel *then* Get Going and Start Again !!

**NEVER THROW IN THE TOWEL.
USE IT TO WIPE OFF THE SWEAT.
THEN KEEP GOING.**

Anticipate Failure As A Possible Outcome

When you begin to start any task, before you even have a "game plan" - you will start with an **idea**.

From that idea comes "the **dream**". And then with that dream, you **anticipate success**.

From that point on you will end up spending an inordinate amount of time working to **prevent** failure.





The first time I crashed and burned, and the second time, I don't know yet, but it's looking good so far.

- Tom Cruise, from Top Gun

beardofmadness.com

"Maverick" and "Goose" had an elaborate plan whenever they went out - serenade the girl, get the girl, then move on to the next girl. When the plan went awry.... they had no back up plan. Why ?

~~Plan A~~
Plan B

Because failure was never part of the plan. When Maverick had to adapt to a new plan, he continually failed because he had no experience with failing. *Only* winning.

Because we spend so much time avoiding failure, when failure happens, we often can't "see" the lessons that come from failure. Then add that you are usually also:



- * frustrated
- * embarrassed
- * and worry how others will view your failure hanging over your head.

thatonerule: #268

They say you don't know what you have until it's gone. Truth is, you knew what you had, you just thought you'd never lose it.

thatonerule.com

Identify and Adapt to the Potential Of Failure

When you begin planning, you need to incorporate, and anticipate potential problems that *might* occur and then try to figure out ahead of time how to handle them if they do occur.

This includes considering potential setbacks, delays, and resistance. Plan how to overcome it. Do this *before* you begin. Then think again!



When we bought our computer system, we worked with "the company", as well as our IT people. We talked with other groups to ensure we had the correct software, the correct computer system, and the correct training for staff.

We listened, and did what everyone told us to do to prevent "problems". This included our **back up system** - just in case there *were* problems.

Pro-active enough you might ask?

No.... When we lost power with our mega system, the back up never worked. Even after all our preventative measures.

No one had plugged it in !



Work From The Bottom Up And Cover The Bases

It was inconceivable to us, and even *less* to the doctors, that the system and back up system failed because someone failed to plug it!

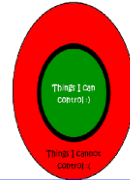
But - it gave us the ability to go back, with the groups involved, and to re-assess what we had for systems, and fail safes. Up to this time, we had been "successful" and had enjoyed basking in the success. We never anticipated nor planned for failure.



From *that* meeting, we began to ask more involved questions than we had in the beginning. Instead of relying on others for the answers to our questions - we began to state answers and *then* ask the question! **We reversed the**

process. We quickly learned that there are no "flukes" that only occur once. Regardless of the embarrassment and feelings of failure we were experiencing at the moment, we could move on and use that experience to become better. But we weren't there yet!

Habit 1: Be Proactive



Identify Areas You Continue To Fail In And Stop Ignoring Them

Re-assessment and continued revisiting of past failures is painful, and against human nature.

No one wants to continually be reminded of their short comings. But, burying your head in the sand and failing to learn from these experiences is foolhardy. Sometimes, failure can be seen as a gift.



Have A Plan - But Improvise Along The Way

In order to survive, you need to be able to adapt on the "run" and make decisions concisely, rapidly and assuredly. You do this when you have the facts regarding the project. Make swift, educated decisions on the facts you have at hand and the outcome you wish to have.



Beware of "Thinking It To Death"

Beware of over thinking the problem. Often the only thing over-thinking does is stops the process from moving forward. You begin to "fear" a *potential* problem instead of identifying it.

Fear of the unknown causes you to **avoid** the process and that will stop everything. Many great ideas get left at the dock because you were "afraid" of what might happen if you stepped forward!



Failure As a Gift

After I graduated from college, two degrees in tow, and on top of the world, there were zero teaching jobs in New England. After months of looking for work, I was pumping gas in a small town and playing softball. Life was good ☺

Bills were paid, and I had no worries!

My father saw this in a different light...and constantly preached about lost opportunities. So...like every smart child - I avoided my father!



I went to work as a "glorified gopher" in a Traffic Engineering firm in Boston. Still no responsibility, no future - but better money and still no bills. After a year, my boss called me in and asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I told him the stock answer of growing up to be just like him, but that didn't work! He gave me three months notice.



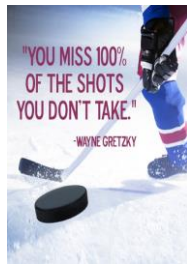
I had never "failed" at anything before so I was devastated, but what was worse was that I had to admit that my father was right.

He helped me get into School to become a Technologist. I told Leo (my Engineer boss) that I had been accepted into a Technical School for Eyes, and he sadly shook his head and said: "Don't bother - you don't have a technical brain".



Fear Of Failure

There was no way I was going to let Leo "win". For two years I studied feverishly to succeed. And I graduated. But then, I failed the JCAHPO test the first time around. I hadn't even considered that *this* could occur - and was devastated. So... I took it again after another year of intense studying. And when I passed.....**I had one goal in mind.....**



I went home, and immediately drove to Boston to see Leo. I walked into his office, glared him down, held my diploma high and said: "Leo..... (insert what you think I said 😊)"



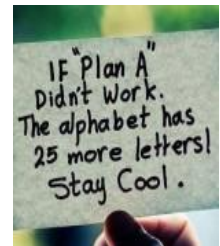
Improvise Along The Way

In order to enact change, you need to have a plan. Once you have a plan, have a group to work with you. **Meet often!**



During these meetings, discuss the potential pitfalls and sidetracks that could occur. This includes: employee by-in, Doctor by-in, and whether or not there is really a need to enact *any* change. Enacting change for change sake usually just creates chaos - and no real change occurs.

Discuss how the change will occur, and what you "see" as the outcome. Then, working from the bottom up, discuss potential problems. At each step, include the people that will be affected by the change - the "front liners" . They often have input that you do not... as they are living it daily. *Discuss what "success" will look like.* Then, plan on how maintain that success.



Change does not need to continually occur - but when it does - make the change count !

I have often heard Administrators and Managers state that they need to "shake things up" either with staff or their work situations. Too much change can be disruptive and will lead to system failures. *Especially* if your staff does not feel that the change needed to occur - or if they believe that the change is going to make their job harder.



Communicate With Your Staff

Your office has a number of workers in it, and each area will accept/ adapt to change in a given manner. You will need to find a way to implement the change so that ALL the groups will understand and accept the change.



www.evolution.com

Effective Communication

In order to effect quality change, you need to be able to speak the staff's "language" to help them make an orderly change *to their world*. Theories, "mission statements", lofty aspirations do not cut it with your staff because it is not *their* goal - it is *your* goal! **You need their buy in.** Many groups will have meeting after meeting to *comprehensibly* make a large change en masse. The problem is it's not the way your company, or staff, works. It is set up to fail before it even begins.



Here's a prime example:
We had "bought" our new computer and were ready to "begin" the conversion process. Day 1 was "the meeting" with the computer pros and Administration to advise us of how we should roll out *their* system . *Their* plan was "tried and true" and had been implemented in exactly this same fashion in the last 15 offices they had been to.



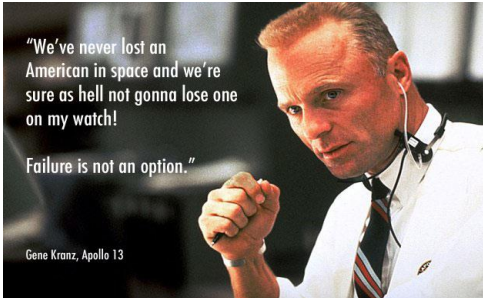
They were fairly aggressive that *this* was the way it was going to go. Problem was, they didn't "know" *our* practice and how *we* operated. Our team discussed this plan off line, and saw it was rife with failure. Not only on Step 1... but Step 31 as well. **We** devised a plan that made sense for our group and then proposed it to the doctors.



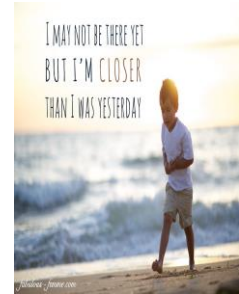
We decided what we needed to be good at, what timeline it was going to occur in, and began to become "clinical" experts at it. Maybe not understanding the computer intricacies - but how that system would affect the overall *FLOW* of our clinic. Once we started to do this - we were well on our way to leading the others and they were beginning to follow because it made sense....and it was **US**.



We didn't know much....but we knew one thing for sure: failure was not an option



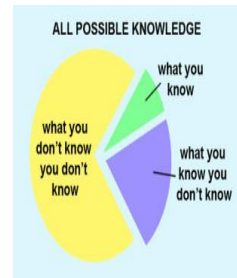
You might think that we were foolish to over-ride the "experts", but their plan made no sense to our group - and it was setting us up to fail. By looking ahead, we were able to identify the potential to fail, and then hit it head on.



When you are teaching a new process to your group, **be knowledgeable**. Your staff already looks at you as an "expert", so use this to help them see that the process is a good one. They trust you. Gene Cernan had the smartest people in the country telling him that there were NO systems to "fix the problem" with Apollo 13, but he held the course and they did "work the problem".



It's ok to admit you don't know *everything* - but be willing to try and learn. Sometimes your learning process will be trial and error - but let them know you are going to be right there with them.



www.josephrosenfeld.com

Same Problem - Different Day: Avoidance

Avoiding issues and problems will not make them go away. If anything, it allows them to fester and grow to a point where they often grow out of control and become destructive to your process. Listen to input, seek it out, acknowledge it and then give credit where credit is due.



Keep Morale Up!

Simply telling your staff that you know they are going a rough time and that you are frustrated too, is not enough. **Be there** with them, be involved in the process, be on site so they can see that you truly are working with them side by side. During our computer conversion, I often called meetings (in small groups) to let different areas vent. Even if they weren't my groups! I would remind the "venters" that other groups were having problems as well - and showed how could we help them.



Coaching

Employees sometimes "lose their way". Maybe they aren't sure what is expected of them or what the goal of the organization is. Your role is to help keep them on track of "the goal". Make sure everyone knows their role in the project. Identify when their deadlines are. Provide **positive feedback** when things go well, and **constructive criticism** when parts go wrong. *And sometimes, overlook the little things.* You can correct them behind the scenes.



Your team will do remarkable "things" if you train them right - and then get out of the way !



"...Chelsea Oglevie and Leah Pemberton, two softball players at Florida Southern College, who carried a player from the opposing team around the bases after she hit a home run, then blew out her knee and became stranded on first base, crying and unable to walk.

The hitter, Kara Oberer of Eckerd College, would possibly have been ruled "out" had she received physical help from her team after she rounded the first base. Unfortunately for Oberer, that's right when the pain hit.

"As soon as she hit first base and her team couldn't help her anymore, she was just absolutely sobbing," Oglevie, the pitcher, told the Tampa Bay Times. "She literally couldn't put one foot in front of the other."

So Oglevie and Pemberton each wrapped an arm around the injured player, carrying her to second base, then third, and all the way home -- gingerly lowering her to make contact with each base along the way"

Huffington Good News

Give The Team The Chance To Lead The Way

We just opened a new clinic this fall. From scratch. In the past, we had always merged a clinic, or closed and then moved to a pre-existing clinic. The details were daunting. We had planning meetings, meetings for when equipment was being delivered, and meetings between the front desk and the technicians on supplies and who got to store things where!



Pay Attention To The Minor Details

All of the large equipment was ordered, and delivery dates were coordinated.

I left some of the details to the Leads to handle . All went great until we started unpacking and realized we hadn't ordered a smaller, but highly used piece of equipment (\$5,000 and one week delivery time) as well as no hazardous waste bins!



A friend of mine said that's what "you get when you have underlings help - you'd be better off doing it yourself".

The Leads felt bad because they had "let me down" on their task.

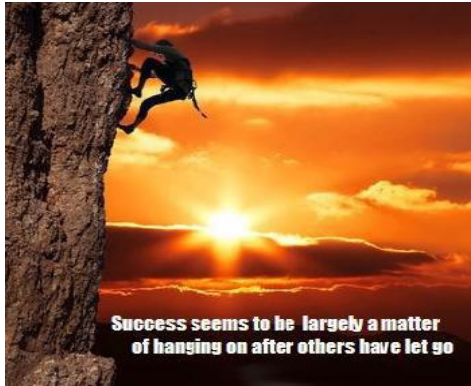
While assuring them if that was ALL that was missed we were in great shape, I downplayed the omission, AND thanking them for their help. Later we went back and figured out how this had been missed....for the next time.



Those who try to do something and Fail... are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and Succeed...



Acknowledge the "failure", but then teach them how to **prevent** these failures in the future. Also, by somewhat downplaying it, you can teach them that there are going to be failures, pitfalls, blips and things that cause us to want to give up and stop the process. Teach your staff how to identify these - and then how to get back on track and move forward.



Fear Of The Unknown
(otherwise known as "Fear of Failure")



Fear of failure can cause the following to occur in your group - and can become infectious if left unchecked:

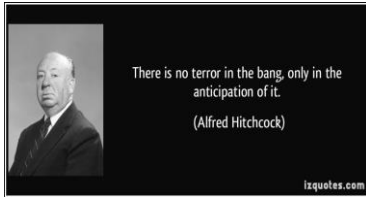
- Reluctance to try new things
- Self Sabotage: procrastination or failure to follow through.
- Self Confidence Issues- not trusting your results or others results
- Perfectionism (only doing project you know will succeed)



Look Between The Lines



Never Go Into A Meeting or a Project Without Knowing The Outcome You want to Achieve



Outcome manipulation? Absolutely!
I managed Senior Residents at the VA. They "lived" for one thing - surgery. On Day One of their rotation I sat them all down and ran through the "rote" introduction - how to do consults, how to dictate, etc. Then I would finish with the following:



"This place is all about following "rules"- whether they make sense or not. You are not here long enough to enact change, *even if* the change would be for the good. My job is to keep the system away from you, so that you can operate, and finish your residencies with little pain. I will do all the "picky" work, and you just see patients. So....here is how it works: I will be your best friend *or* I can be your worst nightmare. You need to decide that today.



After today - it is too late to go back". Then I would leave them with their doughnuts and head to clinic. In most cases, they all followed the path of least resistance and had GREAT surgical numbers and a good experience.



A few souls had a tough time trying to beat a system that ended up beating back. But on a whole - it went as I expected and we got the best out of their short time with us.



COURAGE

Do one brave thing today... then run like hell.

danielghebert.wordpress.com



dgraves@stpauleye.com