Failing is not always failure

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LIVING LIFE WITH LEMONS

BY JOSHUA YEE
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S life giving you a rough time now? Are you wondering if the universe is picking on you? Do you wish that you can just hit the “Restore” button like you can on your iPhone and start all over again? I know the feeling all too well, so if you’re there right now, you are not alone. We don’t always get what we want in life. There are some people who just seem to have everything in control. Then, there are others who are the opposite. But when you’ve been knocked down, you’ve got two choices. You can continue to lie there and have your own little pity party, or you can dust the dirt off yourself and get up. I suffered a major life crisis when I lost my mother when I was a young teenager. At that moment, I thought my life was over and there wasn’t anything left for me to live for. Being a “mama’s boy,” I was left confused and lost. I also knew that I was left with two options.

FORKED ROAD AHEAD

Option one was to remain as is and sulk over the situation. Now, as enticing as that may sound, there isn’t any good staying like that. The truth is, when you’re down, nobody really sees you. It’s cold, hard, dirty and just plain nasty. People trample all over you. I could have played the blame game and started pointing the finger at everything around me. But I know that if I’m a single player’s game and I will never win. Sure, I may feel good, but it will only last for a moment.

Option two, however, was to accept the situation and pick myself up and get moving. As painful as it was for me at that time, I needed to accept the situation, stay positive and look ahead. It wasn’t an easy ride, believe me. But the moment I picked myself up, I began to surround myself with people who genuinely cared about me and who were willing to ride this journey with me.

LOOKING BACK

I knew that I didn’t want to allow my circumstances and situation to keep me down. I knew what I needed to do. Today, as I look back on my journey, I am grateful for the people that rode alongside me. I know that in life, you are not an island and you can only achieve a certain result alone, but with others, you can achieve anything.

To quote Vince Lombardi, “It’s not whether you get knocked down, but it’s whether you get back up.” When life gives you lemons, suck it up and move on.

Had a rough patch recently? Share with us your challenges and how you are taking little steps to overcome them at editor@leaderonomics.com.

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WHAT UNIVERSITY DID NOT TEACH ME by LIM KWAN-LYN

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WOULD YOU FOLLOW A LEADER LIKE DUTERTE? by LIM LAY HSUAN AND KENNETH RAJ SAMUEL

“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”
—Thomas A. Edison

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DEcAY STARTS WHEN YOu LOSE TOucH WITH REALITY

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE BEST BOSS I EVER HAD WAS WHEN I HELD A PART-TIME JOB AS A STUDENT—HIS ATTITUDE COMPLETELY OREGHON. I mean, his attitude completely reshaped my idea of what makes a good leader. He would carry out the same tough, grubby, mental tasks that were asked of his team, and while I appreciated his work ethic, I couldn’t understand why he worked alongside them on top of seeing his managerial duties. So, I asked him. This was his reply. “Well, I can hardly ask you guys to do anything I wouldn’t do myself and besides, how can I get to know the team and their concerns if I don’t spend time on the floor living the same experiences?”

That point, I realised that great leaders are those who lead from the front, they roll up their sleeves and they take the time to get a handle on what’s happening “on the floor.”

This achieves two things:
> a leader quickly builds respect,
> he avoids the risk of losing touch with how things really are within the team and the organisation.

When well-intentioned leaders fail in their vision, it seldom has to do with intelligence, competence, or their determination to succeed. Instead, they fail because they lose touch, which can lead to feelings of invulnerability and a sense of inevitability. Failure is not with intelligence, competence, or the lack of ambition or determination. A former economist in the bank and oil industries, Salmond’s sharp mind served him well as he climbed the political ladder cementing his place in history as one of the United Kingdom’s (UK) finest politicians, having helped his Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) from the fringes to establishing a majority government in Scotland.

In my observation of Salmond throughout the two-year campaign, what took me by surprise wasn’t his ebullient self-assurance, but the number of people around him who seemed to fawn over him as though he were a rock star.

Any difficult questions aimed at him or his ministers—for example, on currency, defence, and pensions—were waved away with generic assurances that there were plans in place and everything would be fine. Salmond appeared to have lost touch with reality. His environment and the people around him had convinced there was no way the “Yes” vote would lose, and this affected his approach to the campaign. On Sept 18, Scotland voted to remain part of the UK by a result of 55%–45% a close margin, but a heavy loss nevertheless for the SNP.

Salmond had hailed the “Yes” campaign as a positive one, yet there remained the sense that the positivity resulted in significant questions being glossed over, while major concerns were shunned with an attitude that everything would turn out well in the end.

THE RISE AND FALL OF A LEADER

During the Scottish independence referendum campaign in 2014, I interviewed the-then First Minister Alex Salmond—a man no one would describe as lacking ambition or determination.

A former economist in the bank and oil industries, Salmond’s sharp mind served him well as he climbed the political ladder cementing his place in history as one of the United Kingdom’s (UK) finest politicians, having helped his Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) from the fringes to establishing a majority government in Scotland.

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PAY THIS

This is exactly why well-intentioned leaders fail. While it’s important to remain positive and focused on the vision, leaders set themselves up for a fall if they fail to take a hard and honest look at the issues that need to be addressed.

No doubt it’s wonderful to be surrounded by positive people, but any leader would do well to keep in mind that it can be much more valuable to have people around them who ask tough questions, rather than agreeing with every whim and suggestion.

Leaders can only be sure of lasting success if they keep company with those who are willing to be upfront and challenging. Otherwise, they might find themselves floundering in the wind without direction.

SANDY IS ALWAYS IMPRESSED BY GREAT LEADERS WHO CAN NAVIGATE THE TRICKY PATH TO SUCCESS. ALEXANDER THE GREAT IS HIS FAVOURITE EXAMPLE, AND HE ENCOURAGES A LOOK INTO ALEXANDER’S LIFE FOR EXCELLENT INSIGHTS INTO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. TO CONNECT WITH SANDY YOU CAN FOLLOW HIM ON TWITTER AT @RealSClarke

Leaders who are susceptible to groupthink are bound to develop excessive confidence in their own ability, which inevitably will serve to the detriment of the organisation’s vision.

GROUPTHINK SETS IN

Most people want to please the boss. Some are sincere in this, while others use it as a manipulative tool, and some don’t want to rock the boat for the sake of an easy life. If you’ve ever been to a meeting where everyone agrees with everything the boss says, that’s an example of groupthink.

Another is in the shared belief that the reality of the organisation’s performance is much better than it actually is. Leaders are at a great disadvantage when group-think sets in, as few people are willing to express valid concerns that might serve to benefit the organisation if they are properly addressed.

THERE’S A LACK OF HONEST SELF-REFLECTION

There’s an idea that self-reflection is the perfect way to gain insights, which is true only if the person doing the reflect-ing is able to take a realistic look at themselves.

“Why do I really want to lead? What am I doing well? In which areas could I improve? What’s most important to me?”

If these questions are answered in lofty ideals rather than with honesty, such self-reflection will simply bolster already misguided beliefs.
GROW, BUILD, TRANSFORM.

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www.leaderonomics.org
VER the last decade, the e-commerce boom has transformed online purchasing from a peripheral consideration to the main preference for a worldwide customer base that continues to grow rapidly.

For businesses, this has meant a great number of benefits as purchasing habits have shifted from the streets to laptops and handheld devices. However, it has also offered a tough challenge to industries that have traditionally thrived on face-to-face interaction.

In order to achieve customer-centricity in today’s thriving digital era, insurance companies like AmGeneral Insurance Bhd (AmGeneral) are defining their digital strategies to respond to these changes in expectations and behaviours, says Luke Boyle, the chief operations officer (COO) of AmGeneral.

In a recent interview with Leaderonomics, Boyle, who is also the head of digital at AmGeneral, revealed that the shift in customer demand has driven year-on-year growth in the company’s digital distribution, which exceeds the insurance industry’s average of 6%-7%.

“In fact, at AmGeneral, our online insurance sales have experienced a double-digit growth from 2015 to 2016,” he says.

What does this mean for AmGeneral’s insurance agents? According to Boyle, because digital and intermediaries (such as agents) are traditionally viewed as competing channels of distribution, delivering digital strategies that complement primary channels while still delivering a great service to customers, is key.

DIGITISATION OF SERVICES

With this in mind, Boyle—who has spent the last 10 years in the insurance industry—has put in place two building blocks to progress the customer experience and therefore will serve as an enabler complementary to what agents offer, and therefore will serve as an enabler complementary to what agents offer, and therefore will serve as an enabler.

PUTTING ON THE CUSTOMER HAT

It can be agreed that in any business transaction, an organisation’s quality of service delivery shapes the customers’ experiences. For a customer, the better the experience, the more likely it is that they would return. As the old adage goes, “They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

Thus, when you look at AmGeneral’s strategic pillars, one of its objectives is to be a genuinely customer-oriented organisation. This means having meaningful relationships with customers based on trust and delivering great services that will be valued.

Leading the way in the execution of this objective is the head of AmGeneral’s customer relations and retention arm, Sreeratha Govindasamy.

Coming from an information technology background and having developed a passion for data-driven marketing and retaining end users, Sreeratha, better known as Sree, works very closely with Boyle and his team, to deliver great customer experiences through AmGeneral’s products and services.

Looking at customers’ behaviours today, Sree says, “Customer research by AmGeneral has demonstrated that they value several qualities when buying insurance: trust and convenience being the most important, followed by level of service and speed of processing claims and inquiries.”

While these may seem like challenging needs to meet, the team at AmGeneral views them as an opportunity to refine its entire value chain, particularly in the area where services are concerned, such as the claims contact centre and communications with customers.

Sree acknowledges that while her team is at the starting point in working towards customer-centricity, progress can already be seen across the company especially in services, such as claims processing.

MINDSET CHANGE

While implementing changes within an organisation is no easy feat, Sree affirmed that it is crucial to give the necessary support and encouragement to her team to challenge the norm and to be agents of change.

After all, “The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without first changing our thinking,” as Albert Einstein once said.

To kickstart this change, Sree and her team have employed a funnel approach to first fix the basics. This includes collating feedback from customers through complaints, social media, focus groups, and transactional surveys, to determine the areas that require attention.

Sree has also begun putting her team through cross-functional knowledge-sharing sessions and training programmes, as this will encourage better understanding of the different key functions within the company and how they individually affect customer touch points and experiences.

“One thing has been attended to, our next step is to change the mindset of employees, and to eventually change the organisational processes and system.

“We believe that once we address these internal needs, our external stakeholders—the customers—will see the good that we are doing for them,” she shares.

PARTING THOUGHTS

For any business, the transition to digital is not an easy one as it requires functional, structural and strategic changes. AmGeneral, however, is on track with understanding their customers better, equipping their teams with the right talent, and developing unique yet relevant strategies, as they embrace the digital space. By continuously delivering great service, creating valuable experiences for both customers and their agents, AmGeneral affirms that they are well on their way to becoming Malaysia’s most trusted insurer.

To find out more about AmGeneral, visit www.amgeneralinsurance.com.
LEADERS MUST CAPITALISE ON FAILURE TO ACHIEVE GREATEST

Have you failed enough to succeed?

By Jack Chua

“Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.” — John F. Kennedy

May 2016

HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT THE SOONER WE COME TO TERMS WITH OUR MISTAKES, THE BETTER OUR CHANCES ARE OF DEVELOPING TOWARDS Greater SUCCESS

When Mia started off, most people thought she was crazy. As a child, she had trouble with her left hand, and as a result, she was very slow at school. She took 32 years to complete her studies. But that didn’t stop her.

Mia was a leader. She was a leader who persevered. She was a leader who learned from her mistakes. Mia is a good example of the power of perseverance.

IMPEDIMENT NO. 1: WE ARE ACHASH OF MAKING MISTAKES

Making mistakes is a part of life. We all make mistakes. We all learn from our mistakes. But making mistakes can be a daunting task for some. Making mistakes can be scary. Making mistakes can be embarrassing. Making mistakes can be humiliating.

But making mistakes is an important part of learning. Making mistakes is an important part of growing. Making mistakes is an important part of becoming.

IMPEDIMENT NO. 2: WE ARE ACHASH OF MAKING MISTAKES

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IMPEDIMENT NO. 3: WE HIDE OUR MISTAKES

Most of us will be shocked when we look at the mistakes that we have made in our lives. We all make mistakes. We all learn from our mistakes. But making mistakes can be a daunting task for some. Making mistakes can be scary. Making mistakes can be embarrassing. Making mistakes can be humiliating.

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IMPEDIMENT NO. 4: WE BLAME OTHERS

Evolutionary biology is a branch of biological science that studies the heredity of living organisms and the processes resulting in ancestry, family, and descent. It is a study of evolution, the study of the development of species over time. It is a study of the processes that have led to the diversity of life on Earth.

IMPEDIMENT NO. 5: THE NEED FOR EXPERIMENTATION

There is an ongoing debate in science about the role of experimentation in the development of scientific knowledge. Some argue that experimentation is essential for the advancement of science, while others argue that it is not necessary.

IMPEDIMENT NO. 6: WE NEED TO REVIEW THE PROCESS

There are a number of ways in which we can review the process of learning. One way is to reflect on our experiences. Another way is to seek feedback from others.

IMPEDIMENT NO. 7: WE NEED TO FOCUS ON OUR STRATEGIES

There are a number of ways in which we can improve our strategies for learning. One way is to set clear goals. Another way is to develop a plan.

IMPEDIMENT NO. 8: WE NEED TO LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES

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THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

FAILING DOES NOT MAKE ONE A FAILURE

By STEPHANIE LING
editor@leaderonomics.com

WEN a child first attempts to stand upright, then falls, he never pauses to think, “Perhaps standing up just isn’t for me.” Instead, the child will try again and again until he succeeds. Society would never say that a young child failed at something. Instead, they would say things like, “He’ll learn how to stand in no time.”

When we were younger, our views on learning from failure were always positive. What changed as we got older? Why do the same processes start to be perceived negatively?

FAILING VS BEING A FAILURE

There is a difference between failing and being a failure. The act of failing relates to the event itself whereas being a failure is closely related to one’s mindset.

Take Jack Ma for instance. Ma is the front runner of Alibaba Group, one of the world’s biggest e-commerce companies with a net worth of US$200bil (RM820bil). Did you know that Ma wrote to Harvard a total of 10 times and was rejected every single time? Did you know he was also rejected from all 30 jobs he applied for—and that included an application to a fast food joint?

Ma has failed many, many times in his life, but he was never a failure. There is certainly something to be said about Ma’s perseverance. He embraced failures and took them as learning opportunities rather than treating them as the end of learning and because of that, he did not hold himself captive to his beliefs. Instead, he used it as motivation to work even harder than anyone else and to push for what he believed he could do.

FAILING LEADS TO MORE FAILURE?

It seems crazy to think that failure could lead to more failure. But sometimes, this happens. People become so afraid of failing again that they end up making more mistakes than they would have otherwise. A little pressure is good as it keeps one motivated to perform at one’s best but too much pressure can result in subpar performance.

Youths are at that age of trying to find their place in society as well as to leave their mark in the world and we should allow for them to make such mistakes. We learn best from failing because we can draw lessons from such an experience.

FAILING IS AN OPTION

The essence of what Leaderonomics Club has to offer is our content. It focuses on character traits and values that we believe are the basic building blocks of great leadership.

Our five-year curriculum covers 49 traits and these include traits like diligence, compassion and forgiveness. In exploring these traits, we employ various methods that include discussions, experiential learning, as well as real-life situations and challenges.

It is through these experiential learning segments that we allow for the youths to be empowered as well as to inspire their fellow peers. Each club member is given the opportunity to share and express his or her opinions freely in a safe environment with the guidance of experienced facilitators. These discussions lead to the ultimate goal of building a community of leaders and to, ultimately, transform the nation.

Hence, as part of the club’s programme, members are required to organise community projects to help improve the condition of the communities around them. This can range from organising communal work to awareness campaigns. It is never an easy process getting the buy-in from your principal or schoolmates when it comes to sharing new ideas.

PARTING THOUGHTS

Here at Leaderonomics Club, we always strive to help our youths realise their talents and potential and to guide them towards self-discovery. Even if that includes them facing some setbacks and failures along the way, we make an intentional effort to teach them that it is not wrong to fail. As long as you don’t let it hold you back, you’ll just have to learn from it and move on.

Stephanie Ling is part of Leaderonomics Youth and is currently under the Clubs initiative. Her personal passion lies in developing all-rounded youths who are able to impact their communities. Occasionally, she can be seen engaging in sun salutations and headstand poses during her leisure time. To engage with Stephanie, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

LEAD CONVENTION

We have eight clubs working together in preparation for our annual LEAD Convention. The LEAD Convention was initiated last year to provide a platform for youth leaders to share about their M.A.D. projects as well as to share about their struggles and learning points. Also, they will get the opportunity to encourage other schools or clubs to adopt their projects in their own communities.

This year’s convention will be held on June 25 in Methodist Girls School, Kuala Lumpur. This year’s theme, “Age Will Not Define Us,” brings the meaning that age in itself does not and should not limit one from achieving one’s best but too much pressure can result in subpar performance. Youths are at that age of trying to find their place in society as well as to leave their mark in the world and we should allow for them to make such mistakes. We learn best from failing because we can draw lessons from such an experience.

LEADING YOUR OWN LIFE

Leaderonomics Club is our effort to drive improvement in leadership and performance within the secondary school system. How does leadership come into the picture? In learning how to exercise leadership skills over our own thoughts and actions, we are better able to focus on the process and to learn how to make the best of any grim situation. With Leaderonomics Club, we provide youths with this safe platform to learn and to seek support from.
STOP THE CLOCK

S UALLY the only things we associate with time at work are deadlines, punctuality, meetings—all the boring stuff—and at some point, all these take a toll on you. You’re tired, lazy, burnt out. Nothing wrong with that except, looking good and creating an impression takes a backseat. All because we want to put together something, with minimal effort.

Unfortunately, for one reason or the other, some of us get the easy part right—sacrificing our image. So how do you avoid these mistakes? What can you do to simplify the process without looking like you wore your sheets to work?

You go TIMELESS.

Google, watch movies, or look through old family photos and you’ll notice some styles just work—no matter which era you live in. In fact, this is probably the first thing you should do before expanding your wardrobe.

Guys, most of what we wear is timeless anyway but I will touch on some must-haves if you don’t already have them. Ladies, you have a variety of options to choose from but here are my top picks and why I think if you don’t even have an ounce of push to dress up, these pieces will still keep you on top of your game.

THE WHITE TOP

One of the timeless pieces ever: the white top. Its ability to match a variety of bottoms makes it very handy for those lazy days. There are two ways to do this. One is the buttoned-down white shirt option, perfect for formal days because all these take a toll on you. You’re tired, lazy, burnt out. Nothing wrong with that except, looking good and creating an impression takes a backseat. All because we want to put together something, with minimal effort.

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THE WHITE TOP

One of the timeless pieces ever: the white top. Its ability to match a variety of bottoms makes it very handy for those lazy days. There are two ways to do this. One is the buttoned-down white shirt option, perfect for formal days because all these take a toll on you. You’re tired, lazy, burnt out. Nothing wrong with that except, looking good and creating an impression takes a backseat. All because we want to put together something, with minimal effort.

Unfortunately, for one reason or the other, some of us get the easy part right—sacrificing our image. So how do you avoid these mistakes? What can you do to simplify the process without looking like you wore your sheets to work?

You go TIMELESS.

Google, watch movies, or look through old family photos and you’ll notice some styles just work—no matter which era you live in. In fact, this is probably the first thing you should do before expanding your wardrobe.

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15 CRITICAL HABITS OF MENTALLY TOUGH PEOPLE

1. THEY'RE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT

Emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of mental toughness. You cannot mentally tough without the ability to fully understand and tolerate strong negative emotions and do something productive with them. Moments that test your mental toughness are ultimately testing your emotional intelligence (EQ). Unlike your IQ, which is fixed, your EQ is a flexible skill that you can improve with understanding and effort.

2. THEY'RE CONFIDENT

“Whether you think you can, or you can’t, you’re right.” —Henry Ford

Mentally tough people subscribe to Ford’s notion that your belief is a powerful influence on your ability to succeed. This notion isn’t just motivational — it’s a fact. A 1999 study at the University of Melbourne showed that confident people went on to earn higher wages and get promoted more quickly than others did.

3. THEY EMBRACE CHANGE

Mentally tough people are flexible and are constantly adapting. They know that fear of change is paralyzing and a major threat to their success and happiness. They look for change that is just around the corner, and then they put on the action should these changes occur.

4. THEY NEUTRALIZE TOXIC PEOPLE

Dealing with difficult people is frustrating and not the most productive thing to do. Mentally tough people control their interactions with toxic people by keeping their feelings in check. When they need to confront a toxic person, they approach the situation rationally. They identify their emotions and don’t allow anger or frustration to fuel their anger. They also consider the difficult person’s point of view and do not get into a back-and-forth with them.

5. THEY SAY ‘NO’

Research conducted at the University of California in San Francisco showed that the more difficult you have saying no, the more likely you are to experience stress, burnout, and depression. Mentally tough people know that saying no is healthy, and they have the self-esteem and self-efficacy to do so.

6. THEY KNOW THAT FEAR IS THE NO. 1 SOURCE OF ENERGY

Mentally tough people know that, when all is said and done, they will remain the chosen few that don’t take too much and will win their failures. Don’t be afraid to take risks.

7. THEY DON’T WAVE THE WHITE FLAG

Mentally tough people know that, when it comes to work and life, they only give up when they know it is the right thing to do.

8. THEY DON’T LIMIT THE JOY OF OTHERS

Mentally tough people don’t pass judgment on others because they know that everyone has something to offer and they can always take other people down a notch in order to feel superior.

9. THEY DON’T LOSE SIGHT OF THE BIG PICTURE

Mentally tough people see the bigger picture when it comes to focusing on the problems that they face. They know that the right thing to do is to make sure they get all the right things into perspective.

10. THEY DON’T LET ANYONE LIMIT THEIR JOY

When your sense of pleasure and satisfaction are dependent upon comparing yourself to others, you are no longer the master of your own happiness. When mentally tough people feel good about something they do, they won’t let anyone’s opinions or accomplishments take that from them.

11. THEY EMBRACE FAILURES

Instead of getting discouraged by failure, they see it as an opportunity to learn and grow. Failure is a part of life, and mentally tough people know that, in order to succeed, they need to be willing to take risks.

12. THEY GET ENOUGH SLEEP

It’s hard to be mentally tough when you’re run down. You can’t think clearly when you’re sleep deprived. It’s hard to be mentally tough without the cornerstone of mental toughness. You need to take care of your body to take care of your mind.

13. THEY LEARN FROM THEIR MISTAKES

Mentally tough people embrace failure because they know that the only way to really learn something is to fail. You can’t learn from success, you can only learn from failure.

14. THEY DON’T WANT AN APOLOGY FOR FAILURE

Mentally tough people learn that, in order to succeed, they need to be willing to take risks. They know that, in order to succeed, they need to be willing to take risks. They know that, in order to succeed, they need to be willing to take risks.

15. THEY'RE RELUCTANT TO FORGIVE

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BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Mental toughness is not an innate quality bestowed upon a select few. It can be achieved and enjoyed. Mentally tough people embrace failure because they know that the road to success is paved with it. No one ever experienced true success without first embracing failure.

The ability to break the mold and take a bold new direction requires that extra grit, daring, and spunk that only mentally tough people have.

Dr Travis Bradberry is the author of several New York Times best-selling books, including Emotional Intelligence 2.0 and the world’s leading provider of emotional intelligence training and tools. His bestselling books have been translated into 18 languages and are available in more than 215 countries. To read more of his articles, visit him on www.leaderonomics.com.

What do you think about Travis Bradberry’s article? Send us your feedback on Twitter or Facebook @leaderonomics. For more articles, visit us at www.leaderonomics.com.
FAILURE IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

By TAMARA JAYNE
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We have all heard those motivational quotes, "Failure is not an option" or "Failure is never final," and sometimes it can be easy to succumb to avoid failure at all costs when really we should be embracing it as a part of us. Sure those quotes may be good to apply to our daily lives as it serves as a reminder to aim for excellence and to pick yourself up when you’ve been knocked down but what would happen if we treated failure as our best friend? What would happen if we learnt to embrace it rather than disgrace it?

YOU APPRECIATE THE TOP MORE WHEN YOU’VE HIT ROCK BOTTOM

Ask every chief executive officer, manager, celebrity, or business person—the many failures they have endured before reaching their goals.

If it were easy to reach the peak of Mount Everest, nobody would need years to train for it. Nobody would need to mentally and physically prepare themselves for the weather, the oxygen levels, or the weight. Nobody would be accredited for being the person who managed to climb Everest because reaching the top would be … well, easy.

When you’ve faced the criticism of family members and friends, when you have tackled the competition of other companies, when you have invested everything and received no returns, when you have tried and tried and tried, for years—and finally make it, the results are bittersweet. The process you take to reach the finishing line may be tormenting, but the sweetest victory comes from the most difficult path.

FAILURE INDICATES THAT YOU TRIED

Before creating the first airplane, the Wright brothers designed the first bicycle. They learnt that the sturdier they made the bike, the tougher it was to manoeuvre it. Eventually, they designed the bicycle in a way that allowed the rider to shift body weight and balance to maintain control. They believed this theory could be applied to a machine that could fly and so they set out to prove it. Each time they launched a new prototype, they would gather information and diagnostics to decide why it didn’t work and why the airplane failed in the air. With every crash, it brought the brothers closer to creating an airplane—which has brought people from all over the world together, making foreign cultures and new ‘frontiers’ much easier to access. Teaching children, from young, that it is okay to fail, prepares them for reality. As children reach high school or even adulthood, they find it hard to cope with failure merely because they were not taught that failure is what you make of it.

YOU GAIN CREDIBILITY

While it’s easy to say that all will be fine, essentially failing teaches us more than if we had not failed at all. Credibility is attained when you can say, “Yes, I’ve been there before. I have failed in that area before. But I got back up. I picked myself up and kept trying.” Dust your hands, wipe the blood stains off of your knees, and keep running. Keep trying. Keep pursuing.

GIVE, TO RECEIVE

Do you ever feel like there’s an empty void within you? Does it perhaps have to do with the fact that you are lacking a sense of fulfillment at work? Do you then wonder if you need to switch to another role, or perhaps to another company, in order to find fulfillment?

There is a simple solution to this: Giving. According to philanthropy adviser and author, Jenny Santi, the act of giving, gives the giver a sense of satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness, more so than the receiver. This is interesting, considering the fact that we always think about how the receiver feels as opposed to that of the giver.

In her interview with Leaderonomics, Jenny talks about how working professionals like you and I, are able to “give” at the workplace setting, and about the real life stories of successful people whom she featured in her book.

Check out the article at www.leaderonomics.com or visit Leaderonomics Media on YouTube to watch the full interview.