

By **SANDY CLARKE**
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THERE'S no such thing as succeeding without any failures at all in life – that's the view of Jonathan Yabut, season one winner of *The Apprentice Asia*. The multi-award winning marketer served for one year as chief of staff to AirAsia head honcho Tan Sri Tony Fernandes and has since carved out a successful career as a motivational speaker and author, as well as having founded his own management consulting firm.

In 2012, Yabut was named among the top seven marketers in the Philippines under the age of 35 to receive the "Seventh Mansmith Young Market Masters Award", and is the author of South-East Asia's 2015 bestseller *From Grit to Great*.

Yabut cuts a sharp figure, coming across like a man to whom success comes easily. He appears confident, self-assured, and astute with a laser-like focus before he even speaks.

But it wasn't always like that for the Filipino, whose success has been built on the back of some tough life lessons delivered to him by the failures he experienced early on in his career.

Having won a cut-throat competitive business reality show, you might think that someone with the business nous of Yabut would be the sort of person who would avoid making disastrous, rookie mistakes.

You'd be wrong.

COSTLY MISTAKE AND LEARNING POINTS

During his appearance on Leaderonomics' *Dare to Fail* series, he recalls starting out as a management trainee for a telecommunications company in the Philippines.

As part of a promotional campaign, Yabut's boss asked him to print two million flyers, which were to be the size of a laptop. The young trainee managed to order the two million flyers – but his order had the flyers down to be the size of calculators rather than laptops.

The mistake cost the company the equivalent of RM50,000.

Yabut says of the experience: "At 20, the first thing you think of is 'Am I going to lose my job?' The reason why I made the mistake was because I didn't properly communicate to confirm the size; I didn't take it seriously.

FROM ZERO TO HERO

HOW ONE MAN'S FAILURE SPURRED HIM TO SUCCESS AND GREATNESS



JONATHAN: "Every time I succeed in life, I remind myself that you're only as good as your last performance."

"Every time I succeed in life, I remind myself that you're only as good as your last performance and that mistake I made is something that is tattooed on me. I see failure as a reminder that, no matter how high you climb or how far you go – in any position or any achievement – things will always go wrong, and so you always need a plan to prevent them."

For Yabut, failure is an experience that can make or break you, depending on how you choose to use it. Some people can view failure as an end-of-the-line travesty from which they are sure to never recover, or they can use negative experiences as a means to learn and grow as they advance through their careers.

TRUE LEADER SHARES THE LIMELIGHT

Yabut challenges anyone to find a success story where failure doesn't come

into the picture. Rather than being a negative force, failure can often act as a means to develop core values and beliefs in leadership.

As he was preparing for his first role in which he would take charge of a team, he was given the challenge of helping others to develop professionally and enhance their corporate careers.

But Yabut soon discovered that he was prone to "hogging the limelight" by, for example, asking someone to prepare presentation slides to be presented to senior management, and then presenting the material himself and gaining the credit. When he was up for another promotion, Yabut's boss passed him over. Curious to know why, he asked his boss for feedback.

"She said, 'You're very good, but you haven't yet learnt the value of leadership. It's not about taking the throne, sitting down and hogging the limelight. Leadership is about taking a step back

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and making your own people shine."

One of the most important lessons he learnt from this particular failure was that, while many people crave attention, effective leaders know how to share the limelight with others so that they can become empowered and, in turn, grow and develop.

PREPARE YOURSELF WELL AND BE PATIENT

When it comes to developing our own career, Yabut insists that patience and preparation are vital keys to success.

In the business world where challenges often arise unexpectedly, being patient and well-prepared will, more often than not, stand us in good stead when we take those challenges on.

Being afraid of failure could very well ensure that we stop growing and moving forward. It's only when we embrace the possibility of failing, and look to learn from the lessons it provides, that we offer ourselves the possibility to move on to bigger and better things.

And there's no better testament to that than the impressive career of Yabut.

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To watch Jonathan Yabut's appearance on the Leaderonomics Dare To Fail series, visit bit.ly/LDRdtfYabut

■ *Sandy is a freelance writer who's had the (mis) fortune of failing under the watch of some intimidating leaders. Thankfully, he has lived to benefit from the lessons that failure provides. Connect with Sandy by dropping us an email at editor@leaderonomics.com*

By **PETER ECONOMY**
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I'VE been to more than a few commencement ceremonies over the years but, when I attended my daughter Skylar's commencement for the UC Berkeley Class of 2016, I had no idea what was to come – none of us did.

Long story short, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg gave the most moving, heartfelt speech I've ever experienced – bar none.

As Sheryl pointed out, the typical commencement speaker tells students all the things he or she has learned in life, the graduates throw their caps in the air, their parents take lots of photos, and everyone goes home happy. However, Sheryl decided to turn this typical commencement address on its head.

Said Sheryl to the thousands in attendance: "Today will be a bit different. We will still do the caps and you still have to do the photos. But I am not here to tell you all the things I've learned in life. Today I will try to tell you what I learned in death."

Through the tragic death of her husband, Dave Goldberg, a little over

THE KEY TO RESILIENCE

a year ago, Sheryl discovered a tremendous reservoir of resilience that helped get her through this terrible, life-altering experience.

According to Sheryl, she found this resilience by overcoming the three Ps described by psychologist Martin Seligman – relentlessly, one by one. These include:

PERSONALISATION

After her husband died of a heart arrhythmia while the couple was on vacation in Mexico, Sheryl blamed herself for not noticing the symptoms of his illness. Getting past this self-blame was the first step in building resilience.

"Studies show that getting past personalisation can actually make you stronger," said Sheryl.

"Teachers who knew they could do better after students failed adjusted their methods and saw future classes go on to excel.

"College swimmers who underperformed but believed they were

capable of swimming faster, did. Not taking failures personally allows us to recover – and even to thrive."

PERVASIVENESS

Sheryl explained that pervasiveness is "the belief that an event will affect all areas of your life."

And, in her case, the loss of her husband understandably led to an all-consuming sadness.

She continued: "I remember sitting in my first Facebook meeting in a deep, deep haze. All I could think was, 'what is everyone talking about and how could this possibly matter?'"

"But then I got drawn into the discussion and for a second – a brief split second – I forgot about death. That brief second helped me see that there were other things in my life that were not awful."

PERMANENCE

According to Sheryl, permanence is "the belief that the sorrow will last forever."



SHERYL: "We should accept our feelings while recognising that they will not last forever."

"For months, no matter what I did, it felt like the crushing grief would always be there," she said.

"We often project our current feelings indefinitely – and experience what I think of as the second derivative of those feelings. We feel

anxious, and then we feel anxious that we're anxious.

"We feel sad, and then we feel sad that we're sad. Instead, we should accept our feelings while recognising that they will not last forever."

In addition, Sheryl suggested that finding gratitude and appreciation is key to resilience. "People who take the time to list things they are grateful for are happier and healthier. It turns out that counting your blessings can actually increase your blessings.

"My New Year's Resolution this year was to write down three moments of joy before I go to bed each night. This simple practice has changed my life.

"Because no matter what happens each day, I go to sleep thinking of something cheerful. Try it. Start tonight when you have so many fun moments to list."

■ *Peter Economy has written more than 80 books on a variety of business and leadership topics. To connect with Peter, e-mail editor@leaderonomics.com*