

## **Failure**

### **What is Failure?**

For most people, failure is one of the things they fear most in life. Failure can be embarrassing and debilitating for many people, but it doesn't have to be that way. People with a fixed mindset fear failure because it says something about them as a person. Failure is evidence that they are not smart or not talented enough. They believe that intelligence and skills are something you are born with and there's not much hope for improving, regardless of how hard they try.

People with a growth mindset can seem kind of crazy because not only are they not afraid of failure, they welcome it. Yes, that's right! For growth mindset people the see failure as a learning opportunity. Failure or F.A.I.L. means First Attempt In Learning.

### **Understanding Failure**

Think about it...if learning is something that is naturally hard and mistakes are a normal part of learning (and developing skills), then it makes sense that when you're learning something new, you are going to make mistakes. The most important thing is to learn from your mistakes. What are the mistakes telling you? When or where did you make the mistake? Do you need to try harder or maybe try a different strategy?

### **Connection to Soccer**

Failure is common in soccer. Teams win games and they lose games. Growth mindset teams are like growth mindset players; they don't fear failure they learn from it. I know of one soccer academy team that has this motto, "We don't lose...we win or we learn." (source of quote unknown)

NBA Hall of Fame basketball player Michael Jordan once said, "I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the last shot of the game and missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

What do you think Michael Jordan meant by the last sentence, "that is why I succeed?"

## Learning from Failure

Embrace failure. Yes, that's right, embrace it! Scottish Football Club Celtic, believes in their academy players having a growth mindset. Players wear a special shin guard ban on their weakest foot and anytime they use their weak foot to make a pass or take a shot, coaches have to say, "Well done." Doesn't matter what the results of the pass or shot are, they praise the process and the courage of the player. Celtic coaches realize that even great players are always trying to improve.

## For Parents and Coaches

The very best thing you can do is embrace the idea of failure and help your child or player learn from that failure. Failure provides all kinds of valuable information that is necessary for learning and improving. Failure is the first steps to learning, improving and building skills.

Click this link and listen to music superstar, John Legend

<https://www.khanacademy.org/youcanlearnanything>

What does John Legend mean when he says, "Any successful people you know, even though it seems like things just happened for them, it usually was preceded by a bunch of failure?"

**Here's a strategy for school.** When you get a test or paper back, ignore the grade. Go through the test/paper and highlight *where you made the mistake* on every test question you got wrong.

- What pattern(s) do you see?
- Did you miss multiple questions but really not understand only one concept?
- Can you use a different strategy for studying, or test taking strategies?
- Basically, look at what you missed and ask yourself why?