

# Failure – Your Stern Tutor

by Charles Marshall

## The purpose of failure is to make you grow

Exercise your imagination with me for a moment. Imagine you're sitting on a piano bench, practicing your scales on an old upright piano. Beside you sits an old Russian piano master who intently watches your exercises. He holds a small ruler in his hand, and when you play the wrong note, he deftly slaps your knuckles with a ruler. It hurts every time he hits you, and you hate it every time it happens. You intently dislike the old man and vow that he will have less of an opportunity to rap your knuckles. You will practice and make sure you rob him of the satisfaction of correcting you.



The name of the old teacher is Failure. You don't have to like him. You don't have to approve of his methods. You didn't hire him and you can't fire him. You only need to be aware of his presence and make sure that you learn from him.

The most important revelation about Failure is that he isn't your enemy. He is your lifelong companion and friend. His purpose is to make you grow. To make you better. Throwing a tantrum or pouting won't make him relent in his mission to teach you. There are no shortcuts to get around him. The only way forward is through him.

Sure, you can get up from the bench and go play. You can ignore his instruction, but tomorrow you will be sitting beside him again, getting your knuckles rapped. Learn his lessons or experience pain.

Imagine for a moment that failure isn't your final destination. Imagine that it is just a chapter in the amazing story of your life. Imagine that one day you will look back on your present trials and wonder what you thought was so difficult about this stage in your development. Imagine yourself graduating to more difficult pieces of music, with new challenges, new responsibilities, and new rewards.

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