

How Failures Lead To Success and Lessons That Can Help You Succeed

Indeed Editorial Team

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Failure may feel uncomfortable or seem like a personal or professional setback, but it actually can help you succeed through growth and opportunities to try again. While it's challenging, failure in the workplace is often inevitable, whether it comes as a missed deadline, a calculation error or an interview without a [job offer](#). Knowing how to accept and appreciate failure can help you use it as a learning opportunity that can lead to future success.

In this article, we explore what professional successes and failures are, how failures lead to success and tips on turning failures into success to help you navigate professional challenges and opportunities.

What are failures and successes?

Failure is the condition of not getting the desired outcome and is normally the opposite of success, though failure is usually different for everyone based on individual beliefs. Success is the accomplishment of reaching a goal, purpose or intended outcome. Your definition of success can vary based on beliefs as well. Common ideas of success can include wealth, prosperity, happiness, wellness and contentment.

While failure and success are natural parts of your personal and professional life, acknowledging the feelings associated with each is an important step in gaining emotional intelligence and the ability to recognize the impact success and failure can have. As you mature in life and your career, it's likely your personal definitions of success and failure change. Depending on your goals and career aspirations, you might experience both failures and successes. Here's a deeper look at each

Examples of failures

Here are some common examples of failures:

- Receiving poor or failing test grades
- Not getting accepted into a degree or certification program
- Interviewing for a position but not securing a job offer
- Getting a bad performance review
- Missing a deadline
- Not making a team

- Losing a client, sale, project or money
- Making a mistake that affects others
- Being terminated from a job
- Staying in an unsatisfactory role
- Not meeting the expectations of others

Related: [5 Productive Ways To Cope With Failure](#)

Examples of successes

Here are some common examples of success:

- Getting a degree from a prestigious college or university
- Earning a significant salary or attaining financial security
- Holding a high-level position or important job title
- Being selected for a promotion
- Having the financial means to give back to others and your community
- Maintaining your integrity in challenging situations
- Gaining wisdom and learning from mistakes
- Obtaining fame or recognition
- Finding a meaningful career
- Sustaining mental health and wellness
- Being respected by leaders, peers and subordinates
- Taking risks that lead to more opportunities

Read more: [15 Ways To Define Success in Your Career](#)

How failures lead to success

Failures often lead to success because they allow you to test and try what doesn't work to discover what does. Experiencing failure might be painful initially, though without it, you might miss the many benefits it can bring, including these ways that failures can lead to success:

Getting space to redirect and innovate

Failure often allows you to examine what worked or what didn't even more so than success. It can foster your critical and analytical thinking skills, allowing you to innovate, redirect and try another way to execute something the next time. You might consider an option you otherwise wouldn't have if you succeeded on the first try. For example, many inventors and well-known businesspeople used failure as an inspiration to create something better than they originally intended, like modern technologies including

iterations of the smartphone, early social media platforms and virtual reality gaming systems.

Redirection also helps you discover more successful options. Think of navigating a maze blindfolded, for example. To find the exit, you likely take many wrong turns, though ultimately they help you move through the maze and get to the exit. Similarly, in life, failing at something might redirect you onto something greater.

Earning the opportunity to cultivate courage and resiliency

Those who experience hardship often develop more resiliency, determination and courage than those who don't. Failure rarely means the end of something and usually, it's often the beginning. For example, you might interview for a promotion and have disappointment when you learn another colleague got the job instead. Using the experience to review your talents, skills and abilities, you might focus on strengthening your professional capabilities and have the courage to apply for the next promotion. Alternatively, your employer might recognize how you handled the situation and create a role specifically with you in mind.

Related: [How To Overcome Fear of Failure](#)

Having the option to try again

Failure can turn into success solely because of the option to try again repeatedly. Determination and focus often increase after experiencing setbacks, especially when you are close to attaining your ambition. You might accomplish your goal on the second attempt or it might take several tries. Even if it feels like it's not working, consider trusting in the process of turning failure into success. It's common to learn more each time you try something, so be willing to take another chance even after experiencing failure.

Gaining wisdom and room to learn and progress

You can often gain new insight, skills and techniques through experiencing hardships or failures. For example, you might work on a technology project that malfunctions the first few days after launch, and your team conducts a thorough study of what went wrong and how to prevent it in the future. If you work on a project with setbacks again, you likely have the capabilities to fix or avoid the issue even more than a colleague whose projects were successful immediately.

Tips for turning failures into successes

Handling professional failure takes effort, acceptance and action. Here are a few tips on how to turn failure into success:

- **Think of failure as a tool.** Consider changing your mindset about failure and instead think of it as a tool to help you determine what works and what doesn't. Viewing it as an opportunity to innovate rather than as a deterrent to success can help you accept and use failure to your advantage.
- **Separate failing from failure.** Many consider failing and failure as different concepts, with failing as the act of trying something you learn doesn't work and failure is the act of giving up and not continuing to try. Thinking of them as separate terms can help you stay motivated toward success.
- **Define what success means to you.** Knowing what you want to achieve and how you measure success can also help you determine your outlook on what defines failure or how to move past it.
- **Keep it professional.** Often how you handle a failure or error in a professional setting matters more than the mistake itself, so consider keeping a professional demeanor and exercise emotional intelligence. Remain composed, mindful and understanding about the situation.
- **Take responsibility.** Owning your failure often is a sign of maturity and professionalism, both of which are powerful qualities in achieving success.
- **Have confidence and stay committed.** While others can help you achieve success and move past failure, most of the work and accomplishment come from within. Stay self-confident in your abilities and continue to work hard toward your professional goals, outlining the steps and actions it takes to achieve them.
- **Move forward rather than dwelling on it.** Consider alternative options and take action to address the failure you experienced. Working to correct a mistake rather than dwelling can often help you get motivated and achieve success faster than continually thinking about what went wrong.
- **Take a break and then set new goals.** It's okay to pause after experiencing failure, and it can help you gain perspective on what lessons there are to learn from the situation. Afterward, consider creating an action plan and set specific goals, organizing yourself and focusing on the next steps to take toward achieving your original desired outcome or a new victory.