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THE SBRA COMMUNITY RE-DEFINING FAILURE



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

Fear of failure, in itself, could be one of the greatest barriers to one's success. Just think about it, from the moment we are born we are being told "be careful", "watch out", "don't do that", NO.

Therefore, our brain becomes programmed that if we try something new, we might fail and be left with consequences that may lead to physical or emotional pain. This fear of failure stops us from making attempts that could just possibly result in the necessary breakthrough we need to move forward and find success.

Without redefining failure there would probably be fewer Entrepreneurs. We are told that over 50% of new businesses fail in the first 2 years and in most definitions of "entrepreneur" you will find the word "RISK". Doesn't sound like starting a business is a smart thing to do, BUT, we do it anyway. Without redefining failure and taking some calculated risks, where would the world be today? Just think of the medical and technical advances we have seen over the past 50 years. All because someone looked at the word failure in a totally different way. They redefined failure.

Here is a true story about a man that devoted every moment of his life trying to prove a theory he had. One day his best friend stopped in to see him and started the conver-

sation by saying "Thomas, I feel so sad for you as you have been working on this project for so long and have done nothing but fail hundreds of times, and yet, you have nothing to show for all your hard work. You have become a miserable failure." Instantly Thomas replied "You could not be more wrong my dear friend, I have not failed once. What I have been able to do is, one step at a time, eliminate the things that were preventing me from accomplishing what I have set out to do." Several days later Thomas Edison introduced the light bulb to the world.

Thomas Edison redefined the word failure.

Nobody goes into business to fail but perhaps they should. Both research and practical experience indicates that failing can often provide an entrepreneur with an invaluable opportunity to learn and benefit. And as Thomas Edison proved, failure sometimes lays the groundwork for future success.

Why is it important to look at failure a different way? Failure, if not dealt

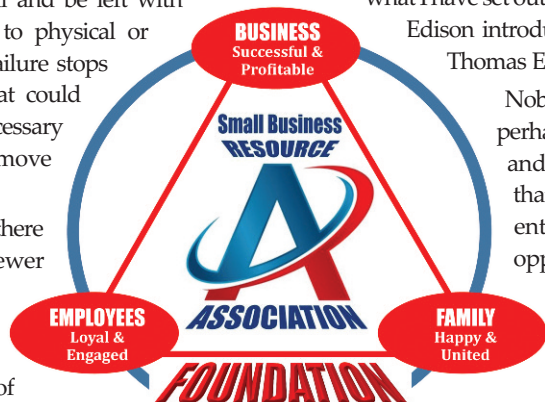
with properly, can produce many other negative emotions such as anger, embarrassment and anxiety. These emotions can and will affect relationships and your ability to make sound decisions which will make it very challenging for you to move forward. When faced with failure, take time to look at it carefully from all sides to not only avoid future mistakes but most importantly to understand that failures do happen but THEY DO NOT DEFINE YOU. Learn from your failures and you will become better at everything you do.

How to deal with failure to become a better you.....

1. **Recognize your feelings**—Disappointment and anger are normal. Try to understand where those feelings are really coming from and what those feeling are trying to tell you. **Don't brush it off.**
2. **Don't become a victim**—One failure does not define you. Make a list of all your successes, no matter how big or small they may be. **Focus on them.**
3. **Let go of approval**—Focus your goals on you alone and not the approval of other's expectations.
4. **Accept responsibility**—Failure may be the result of a mistake you made. Take action to not make that mistake again. Remember, we are human beings and we all make mistakes.
5. **Don't beat yourself up**—Everyone makes mistakes and has failures. Learn from your experiences.
6. **Get rid of negativity**—Turn negative emotions into emotions that challenge you to find solutions. What could I have done differently... and then form an action plan.
7. **Surround yourself with a support team**—Find a friend or colleague that you can trust and talk to. Share your thoughts and seek their advice.
8. **Make it a learning experience**—Learning from our failures is not only how we avoid making the same mistakes, it's how we discover how useful failure can be. Thomas Edison "Saw the Light" in his failures.

No one likes to fail, but without failure how can we really learn and get better at all we do. Embrace the fact that you will make mistakes and have failures in your life. Just don't allow them to define who you are.

Redefine your failures as a success because you gave it your best and you learned from your experience. Your failures become your success because you have improved.



SBRA Business Spotlight



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