

Life Blogs

How to handle failure in 7 steps

“You are hereby authorized to screw up, bomb, or fail at one or more relationships, hookups, friendships, texts, exams, extracurriculars or any other choices associated with college ... and still be a totally worthy, utterly excellent human.”

This ‘permission slip’ is issued to all students enrolling on the ‘Failing Well’ programme, a Smith College initiative that aims to help high achievers cope with basic setbacks. But failure is not limited to your college days; so can you ‘fail well’?

Here are my 7 tips for handling the obligatory life experience of failure:

1. Be Objective

Keep to the facts of a situation and not the story, e.g.

Objective: ‘I gave a presentation that went mostly well but didn’t respond to some of the questions effectively.’

Story: ‘It was the worst experience of my life, everyone thought I was an idiot.’

2. Retain perspective

In the grand scheme of things, the larger context of your life, how important is this really?

3. Take a longer view

In ten years’ time, how will you feel about this? What is it actually going to impact upon?

4. Reduce your ego’s influence on you

Does your discomfort come from a need to look good, earn approval or retain control? – yes? – so relax, that’s just your ego, it’s not even real.

5. Take the learning

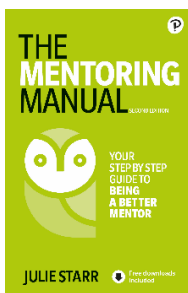
How will this inform and help you in future? Make you stronger? Wiser? – seek the gift, it’s always there.

6. Turn it around

Move out of a victim mindset, get powerful and turn things around. What is your ‘resourceful response’ to this situation, e.g. go and have an open conversation about what happened? Have another go?

7. Let go and move on

Once you’ve run through the above steps, decide that you are ‘complete’ with the experience, then stop telling the story to yourself or others, and focus on something else. Think about how often you’ve already done this in life and gain a sense of possibility around that.



About Julie Starr

Julie Starr’s *The Mentoring Manual* has clear principles, tips, and free supporting downloads to enable managers and leaders to build effective mentoring relationships. Her other books, *The Coaching Manual* and *Brilliant Coaching* build coaching ability through simple principles and practical approaches. Julie is the founder of Starr Coaching, a leading provider of leadership and management development.

Find out more at www.starrcoaching.co.uk and www.LearnStarr.com

