

Failure 201—Success & Failure Mindset

Targets vs. Goals

We misunderstand failure because we focus on the wrong thing.

- Most believe that you have to get a bulls eye on dart board or else you fail.
- Reality is might have missed the target but you get to choose what your goal is
- Goal of getting closer to the bulls eye each time.
- Goal of improvement and progress.
- Mastery vs. Success (Sarah Lewis from Yale school of Art)
 - Success typically means you want approval
 - Mastery is valuing your own opinion over others
 - Mastery is loving the process of improving.
 - Success is hitting the bullseye.
 - Mastery is being able to do it again and again.
- Florence Chadwick
 - Swimming the 26 miles between California and Catalina Island
 - Swam for 15 hours until she hit the fog.
 - Got in boat less than one mile from the coast.
 - Keep the shoreline in your mind's eye despite what your eyes actually see.

Change

Change is not comfortable. There is no way to do this stuff and guarantee that you will feel good. "I will accept a certain level of discomfort."

"To overcome my fear of failure, I have to be willing to _____"

Fill in the blank (be an inconvenience, look stupid, lose money, lose power, lose my reputation)

Overcoming fear of failure is uncomfortable. There is NO other way.

"I have to trust that I will still be accepted, by myself and others, when I fail."

- This is vulnerable and there are no guarantees.
- Trust is required to overcome failure.

Positive Uncertainty

Positive Uncertainty is a philosophy for making decisions when you don't know what the future will be, which is all the time.

Positive Uncertainty starts with two attitudes.

1. First, you need to accept the uncertainty of the future because the future is real and inevitable. No one has been to your future. There are no advance scouts, guides or road maps.
2. Second, you need to be positive about this uncertainty because it is better than certainty. If the future were certain or even predictable, the only choice is to prepare for it. By being uncertain you allow yourself to be a proactive decision maker instead of reactive decision maker.

1. Be focused and flexible about what you want

- Traditional decision theory stresses being focused on your future goals.
- This strategy is not obsolete but incomplete.
- Being focused helps you attain goals BUT can prevent you from discovering new goals.
- Use your goals to guide you not govern you.

2. Be aware and wary about what you know

- When making a decision we are told to get the facts because collecting information will reduce uncertainty. However, very often...
- The information you have is not what you want
- The information you want is not what you need
- The information you need is not available
- Look for "mis-information," missing information and out-of-date information
- Use both fact and intuition when deciding
- To be aware and wary is to use your whole brain – the rational, factual side and the intuitive, imaginative side.

3. Be realistic and optimistic about what you believe

- What you believe determines what you see – and do. (i.e. Success bias, etc...)
- To be realistic is not to be totally objective. There is no such thing.
- Reality is not only what is "out there." It is also in the mind's eye of the beholder.
- The optimistic part of this principle (the non-traditional part) helps you notice how beliefs can be prophecy. Optimism leads to proactive behavior.
- May be the most significant factor in creative decision making

4. Do whole-body decision making

- Most people don't know how they decide.
- Be whole brained and bodied. You use both your head and heart when deciding.

- Avoid rigid decision rules. Rules are for guidance not obedience.
- Make up your mind creatively. Every decision is different, every strategy should be different.
- Become a versatile, creative decision maker.

Being positive about uncertainty brings about:

- the opportunity for proactive creativity in your decision making.
- If the future is certain, all you can do is prepare for it.
- When the future is uncertain, you have the opportunity to influence it.
- You can be part of creating your future.

The Sherlock Principle

This is why we like the show Sherlock so much. He has the magical power of having certainty when everyone else doesn't.

Homework

1. When you fail or make mistakes, what is the critical self-talk you hear in your head?

2. You weren't born saying those things to yourself. Where did you learn those messages? Whose voice are they?

3. "To overcome my fear of failure, I have to be willing to ... _____ (be an inconvenience, look stupid, lose money, lose power, lose my reputation).

I know this will make me uncomfortable, yet I will still choose to do it because I am tired of living my life in fear."

Sources

Positive Uncertainty

<http://www.gelattpartners.com/positiveuncertainty.html>