

Building Resiliency and Overcoming Fear of Failure

Strategy	Description
1. Allow yourself to feel devastated for a while	It's OK to feel bad when you fail, but set a time limit on your pity party. Set a timer, then go ahead and cry about not getting your dream internship, grieve the loss of your dream internship, get angry that someone else (probably less deserving!) got your dream internship. When the timer goes off, you're done feeling sorry for yourself. Wipe your eyes, put a smile on your face, walk out the door, and start working on your next application.
2. Change the tape in your head	Instead of negative self-talk (e.g., "I can't believe I was so stupid,") stop the negative self-talk by silencing it, replacing it with positive self-talk, or crowding it out with distractions.
3. See failure as courage	When you put yourself out there and become vulnerable, public 'failure' is embarrassing. For example, campaigning for a student government office and not winning the election is embarrassing. Reframe this 'failure' as courage. It's easy to stay on the sidelines and criticize others (i.e. the Monday morning armchair quarterback), but you had the courage to actually be in the ring.
4. Know when to say when	Sometimes, it makes sense to acknowledge defeat and move on. In some competitive industries, failure may be indicative that a career may need to head a different direction. By admitting that, you can change and be successful in a different direction.
5. Failure is an event, not a person	What happens when we receive a "D" on an exam? The first thing that pops into my head is "I'm a failure." Reframe failure as an event, not a measure of your self-worth. Note that you failed at one exam in one course; you are still a smart, kind, encouraging, generous person. The failure is one event; it does not make you, the person, a failure.
6. Think positive while in the process	Many job interviews require a group session where the job candidates interact. It can be natural to generate unfavorable comparisons and feel inadequate following this type of format. It may be OK to have those thoughts after the interview, but during the interview, you need to think positive. It is far more beneficial during the interview process, and others may be having the same thoughts.
7. Be patient	In some cases, you did everything right, but for some reason, the timing wasn't right. You aced the interview, but the manager is still waiting on approval. You predicted an outcome, but your colleagues were slow to see your vision. You need to have confidence that you did what you could and wait patiently, for the outcome.
8. Confide in a friend	Confiding in a trusted friend allows you to vent frustration, anger, or disappointment at a failure. A truly good friend will support you, and build you up. Of course, make sure you are confiding in a true friend who will listen to you and support you and comfort you. Also keep in mind that a true friend may be biased. Sometimes, confiding in a friend is for comfort rather than brutal honesty.