

# FAIL – First Attempt In Learning

Failure is good for success! As the title suggests, it is simply a stepping stone for later accomplishments. This is best illustrated by Thomas Edison, whose most memorable invention was the light bulb. Edison, purportedly took 1,000 tries before he developed a successful prototype. “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?” a reporter asked. “I didn’t fail 1,000 times,” Edison responded. “The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.

Failure is often viewed as a non-option and unacceptable. Unlike Edison, many of us avoid the prospect of failure. In fact, we’re so focused on not failing that we may limit success, settling instead for a life of mediocrity. This view limits us from reaching our full potential and stops innovation and growth. So if you fail, **EMBRACE IT!** Failure is nothing to fear. To achieve your goals, you can’t fear failure. You must think big and push yourself.

John Maxwell talks about these concepts in his book, “Failing Forward.” In it, he outlines seven key Principles for embracing failure:

1. **Reject Rejection** – Do not base your self-worth on your performance. Learn from your mistakes and keep your self-image high. Avoid self-talk that exacerbates negative emotions.
2. **Don’t Point Fingers** – Blaming others usually only leads to alienation, violated trust, and a victim mentality. It inhibits learning from your failures.
3. **See Failure as Temporary** – You are not the failure; you may have just failed at a specific task. View failure is a momentary event, not a lifelong epidemic.
4. **Set Realistic Expectations** – You will never be perfect at anything you do until adequately practiced, and even then perfection is not easily obtained. Be sensible about what you realistically can, and cannot do.
5. **Focus on Strengths** – Give your talents and abilities to the world. People that operate from a position of strength enjoy a far lower rate of failure than those laboring in areas of weakness.
6. **Vary Approaches to Achievement** – It is ok to explore your options and try new things. Experiment until you find what works best for your success.
7. **Bounce Back** – Avoid rehashing your mistakes. Have a short memory when it comes to failure. Take the necessary steps to learn from mistakes and remember that the past cannot be altered.