Application Guide

HOW TO GET A RETURN ON FAILURE WITH JOHN MAXWELL

BOTTOM LINE:

Failure is inevitable. A critical component of effective leadership is knowing how to leverage success from those failures.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

I. Nobody wants to fail, but in order to leverage success and reap a positive return from failure we must **anticipate it**.

- A. Many individuals fear failure because they fear being a poor leader.
- B. Fear prevents us from attempting things we *should* attempt.
- C. The biggest disservice a leader can give to their team is NOT talking about their failures.
- D. Failure is going to happen when risks are taken.
- E. To shift your perspective on it, begin asking yourself, “What would I attempt to do if I knew failure could give me a positive return?”

II. To leverage success from failure, both successes and failures must be held together.

- A. Failure is a catalyst for bringing people to actions that begin to make them better and ultimately lead to success.
- B. Stop thinking failure is the worst thing that could ever happen and success is the best thing that could ever happen.
    - 1. When we separate failure and success we exaggerate and maximize the negative effects they have on our lives.
        - a. Failure makes us depressed.
        - b. Success makes us arrogant.
        - c. Together they balance out and bring value to each other.
    - 2. Failure keeps us humble, humility makes us teachable, and improvement comes when we learn.
    - 3. We learn virtually nothing from our successes because we often fail to evaluate them.
- C. Keeping failure and success close gives us resiliency and tenacity to stay in the game when we don’t want to be in the game any more.

III. To leverage success from failure, we have to understand the difference between a “*good miss*” and a “*bad miss*.”

- A. Good misses move us forward and lead to adjustments.
- B. Bad misses move us backward and lead to excuses.

IV. Everything worthwhile is uphill, but when we move uphill there are more challenges and, therefore, more potential for failure.

- A. Embrace that it is hard; we can’t coast our way to success.
- B. *Progress always requires a process.*
    - 1. **Testing**: Try something you’ve never tried before.

2. **Failing:** You won't get it right on the first try.
3. **Learning:** The fruit of failure is learning, and the fruit of learning is improvement.
4. **Re-entering:** Progress is an upward cycle; after you improve, you repeat the cycle at a different level.

C. When we anticipate failure we are not blindsided when it comes. Instead of sidelining ourselves and/or the project, we simply make adjustments and keep moving forward.

V. "*Learn your lessons in the valley and make your decisions on the mountain.*" — John Maxwell

A. The valley (aka failure) is what teaches us, but our views and perspectives are blocked while we are in the midst of it.

B. The mountain gives us new perspectives on what we learned and allows us to make the best decisions for progress.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION

1. What is the greatest lesson you've learned from a failure?
2. Why do you think so many people fear failure?
3. What is the worst thing that could happen if you failed today?
4. What is one new thing you can try in your organization today?

RESOURCES MENTIONED

1. The Maxwell Leadership App

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