



Making Mistakes & Mastering the Art of Achieving Greatness

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No-one wants to Feel like a Fool

Remember how it felt at school when you raised your hand to answer a question and got it right? What a warm feeling and proud smile this brought to your face on hearing your teacher say *“that’s correct well done”*. Do you remember how it felt when you got the answer wrong? - the kids laughed and out the corner of your eye you noticed a classmate whisper something to the person next to him / her. You saw your teacher give a slight sigh then go on to the next person who knew the answer. You shrank into yourself feeling foolish, embarrassed and felt that little bit less confident. We all have a natural tendency to want to be right, do well and be seen in a positive light

The Difficulty of Fessing Up

We are accustomed to having positive responses to getting things right and negative responses to being incorrect. Inevitably these negative judgements and reactions, (imposed by both ourselves and others), bring on a wave of difficult and uncomfortable reactions. We feel embarrassed, ashamed, weak, unworthy, useless, stupid, insecure and inadequate. We also become anxious about the way others view us and fear losing perhaps our position, status, job or relationship. It is then easy to understand why we do not rush to raise our hands in admitting to a mistake

Additionally, there is the stress and anxiety to deal with. This is related to being responsible for someone or something, as well that very strong and unpleasant feeling of guilt if things go wrong. Admitting you made a mistake can feel risky and damn well uncomfortable. It is not surprising then that we may want to avoid this at all costs

The Mistake Masters

So, with all of this in our midst how do we turn this around, so that we can positively and constructively deal with our mistakes, in a way, which empowers us and makes us more resilient, smarter and happier?

People who can recover and excel from their mistakes, have a great ability to turn mistakes into experiences, which inform and inspire them to improve and grow. These individuals possess personal characteristics such as:

- The capacity to accept appropriate responsibility
- The ability to respond quickly to feedback
- Being able to focus and identify clear goals
- Being highly motivated and driven by situations to advance
- The ability to persist and not easily become discouraged
- Possessing a strong self- belief and clear sense of self-identity
- Being reflective of themselves and circumstances
- Able to constructively regulate their emotions with effective responses in moving forwards

Mistakes can Break us or Make us

If we can fully take on board the productive nature of mistakes, we can harness a huge potential to transform our lives. We learn more from our mistakes than from our successes because we are propelled to consider what went wrong. We are drawn to a search for solutions, further knowledge and understanding, along with challenging us to do better. Most importantly, we are shown how to avoid making the same mistakes in the future

Ten Steps to Making Your Mistakes Work for You Rather than Against You

1. Accept appropriate responsibility in the situation. Acknowledging that you made a mistake reveals the fact that you are human. This is expressed in your vulnerability and authenticity. When you hold yourself to account, you inspire trust and respect along with demonstrating strong leadership

2. **Be the Architect of Your life:** Do not allow mistakes to define who you are or what you are able to achieve. You can cultivate your confidence and a clear sense of identity by recognising mistakes as separate temporary actions and by making a conscious effort to avoid negative judgements. Establishing the ability to step back and realistically assess the situation will enable you to discover your wider possibilities
3. **Change the negative dialogue in your head:** Don't waste time and energy beating yourself up or seeking to lay blame. Eliminate the idea that this is a weakness. This is ultimately self- defeating and sets up barriers to greater understanding and moving forward. Recognise that life naturally involves making mistakes, which can be utilised to work to your benefit
4. **Focus on correcting the Mistake:** Invest adequate time and attention, in reviewing the circumstances and steps, which relate to the mistake. Create ideas and clear plans on how you can constructively address and if possible, rectify the situation. In order to reinforce your new experience share, implement and actively put it into practice, as soon as possible

5. **Seek & Accept Support:** When you make a mistake, particularly a major one the last thing you want is to feel Isolated, helpless or like your back is against the wall. Do not be afraid to ask for help, accept guidance and learn from others. Co-operation and openness with others enable you to build strong networks and effective resources

6. **Confront your fear of making mistakes:**

"The greatest mistake we make is living in fear that we will make one"

John C. Maxwell

Develop your awareness around the fear of making a mistake. Fear can cause you to become stuck and hinder you from moving forward. It can also lead you to making rash or poorly considered choices through fear of missing out. Push through the discomfort. Do not let fear stand in the way of learning, discovering new possibilities and greater growth

7. **Cultivate Emotional Intelligence:** Invest in developing your understanding, awareness and control around your own and other people's feelings and emotional response. Practice strategies, such as; Mindfulness, reflection, self-monitoring together with engaging through active listening and fostering empathy. This will enable you to be more considered, focused and in tune with yourself and the environment. In turn this supports you to assess and make constructive choices
8. **Feed Your Motivation:** In dealing with mistakes focus on aspects, which drive your interests, desires, beliefs and the needs of the situation. Use new information and your imagination to identify further options. If you can fuel your motivation by finding the meaning in the situation and whenever possible having fun you will increase your chances of success
9. **Maintain Focus & Persistence:** Building your skills in perseverance, as well as developing clear thought processes towards your goals increases the likelihood of positive outcomes. Take time to develop logical and creative thinking, in continually trying out different approaches

10. **No Place to Save Face:** Do yourself a favour and don't be too proud, stubborn, superior or stupid to say that you're sorry. Being able to express regret or remorse is a strength, which helps you to connect more deeply with others

“Ultimately, we should view mistakes as strong and valuable life lessons”



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