



# JIM HARSHAW JR.

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## *Revealing Failure as the Path to Success*

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #298

### **3 Proven Ways to Transform Failure into Success**

Failing hurts. It sucks. So how do you reconcile the idea that failure is in fact benefiting you? How do you wrap your head around the fact that adversities are your stepping stone towards success? And how exactly do you succeed through failure?

As I always say to my kids, [Success Through Failure](#) ain't just the name of a podcast. If you observe the most successful people, one thing they have in common is having failed miserably at one point in their lives. And they even give credit to their setbacks for making their success possible.

Now it's your turn to live out your success story!

This week's episode is all about failure. How you can benefit from it, how you can wrap your mind around the benefits, and the 3 concepts to understand failure.

My goal is for you to go out into the world and do incredible things. So let's begin this adventure by taking action and hitting the play button to this episode.

### **Top Quotes From This Episode**

*"Understand that failure is just a step on your path to success."*

*"Allow failure and experimentation to happen because that's how you get better at something— you go out, try, create things, and fail."*

*"Understand that failure is the world telling you how to improve. It's NOT a final judgement on your potential."*

## Show Notes

### 3 Concepts to Understand Failure

#### 1. Failure is necessary for breakthrough

Failing is inevitable. As the song goes, "Even the best fall down sometimes." Let's talk about some stories of failure, which led to breakthroughs:

- **My senior season (6:23):** During my [TEDx Talk](#), I shared my series of failures as a wrestler at the University of Virginia. And after years of tears, doubts, and hopelessness, I discovered the value of "giving up" and [letting go](#), which led me to my athletic breakthrough.
- **Building this business (10:29):** Building my business was a product of surviving years of struggle. I had set a goal of quitting my job by the time I was 40 but I failed; until I found out that I could let go of making enough money and focus on serving.
- **Dick Fosbury (11:40):** How being mediocre and wanting to get to the next level forced him to try something different.
- **Miracle on Ice (12:25):** In 1960, the US Hockey Team beat the Russians. And the last person cut from the US team watched at home with his father who said, "Guess they cut the right guy." Imagine the pain?

20 years later, that same man watched the team beat the Russians again. This time he watched from the bench. Herb Brooks, architect of Miracle on Ice, was the man who was cut from the 1960 team.

I had to go through that failure to have that mental breakthrough. Dick Fosbury had to have failures, too, to try something new and different. Herb Brooks had to experience that failure to achieve that breakthrough. It's the same with you.

**So understand that your failures are just a step on your path to success.** You are in great company if you're experiencing failure. Don't quit because this is your path. This is part of it.

#### 2) Failure is learning

Reid Hoffman, the founder of [LinkedIn](#) said, "*If you're not embarrassed by your first iteration, you've launched too late.*" There is learning in failure and let's talk about these interesting studies that support this idea:

- **1 vs 100 (15:25):** In the book [Art and Fear](#), they talk about this study regarding a photography professor who divided his class into two groups. The first group was asked to submit one perfect photo, while the second group was tasked to submit 100 photos— regardless of quality.

At the end of the semester, when they submitted all the photos and identified which of the photographs was the best, you would assume that the best photo would come from group one who put all of their eggs in one basket to capture that one great image, but the best photographs actually came from the other group. Why? Because they went out, experimented, and ultimately, they failed.

- **Guessing vs Memorizing (18:07):** In 2018, a team of educators in Toronto researched which study methods were linked to the highest levels of academic achievement. They placed students into two groups: those who studied by memorizing information and those who guessed first, then got feedback on their answer. The students who guessed first and got feedback outperformed their peers who just memorized information, despite studying the same concepts.
- **Elliana (19:38):** My daughter, Elliana, has been constantly doing gymnastics all around the house and it's absurd how much this girl fails. But the sheer amount of failure that she is experiencing has been so educational for her.

**Allow failure and experimentation to happen because that's how you learn and get better at something: you go out, try, create things, and fail.**

### **3) Failure is feedback**

We just talked about how failure is learning. And after failing on something for the first time, you'll get feedback. You learned, now you're doing it better the second time. And that's the final concept to understand failure: failure is feedback.

- **Try this with me! (21:55):** If you're in a safe space (don't do this while driving), try this activity with me. Tag me on [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) and share what you've learned.
- **[Erik Weihenmayer \(23:12\)](#):** His blindness didn't deter him from summiting Mt. Everest and whitewater kayaking the Grand Canyon. Imagine the failure along the way. Amazing failure was part of his learning process.
- **Studying failure (24:38):** The Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University conducted a study about [why do some people succeed after failing, while others continue to flounder?](#) Their research found that all the successful ones started as losers, but not all of the losers became successful.

The difference lies in how long the time was between attempts: the sooner you try again, the more successful you'll be.

**Failure is feedback. If you take that feedback and apply it again quickly, you are more likely to succeed.**

This is my hope: **Understand that failure is the world telling you how to improve. It's NOT a final judgement on your potential.**

### **List of Resources Mentioned in the Episode**

[Why I teach my children to fail | Jim Harshaw | TEDxCharlottesville](#)

[JimHarshawJr.com/YouTube](http://JimHarshawJr.com/YouTube)

David Bayles' ["Art & Fear: Observations On the Perils \(and Rewards\) of Artmaking"](#)

Erik Weihenmayer's ["No Barriers: A Blind Man's Journey to Kayak the Grand Canyon"](#)

[Why Do Some People Succeed after Failing, While Others Continue to Flounder?](#)  
(KelloggInsight)

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### **How to Leave a Rating and Review for STF on iTunes**

Ratings and reviews help a lot! Please consider leaving one. It's really simple. Here's how: <https://youtu.be/T1JsGrkiYko>

### **Other Episodes Referenced**

[#291 Logically Override the Default: How to Stop Procrastinating, Scrolling, and Getting Distracted](#)

[#295 One Revolutionary Yet Simple Tactic for Releasing Your Doubts and Breaking Barriers with Hale Dwoskin](#)

[#96 Summiting Everest, Kayaking the Grand Canyon... Blind: Erik Weihenmayer](#)