



JIM HARSHAW JR.

Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #305

Patrick Sweeney

Inc. Magazine called Patrick Sweeney one of the most interesting men alive.

He's a millionaire entrepreneur, world record holder, former Olympic-level athlete, and angel investor (Slack, Y Combinator, Instacart).

But before all that, he was terrified of everything. He didn't have confidence or self-esteem. But after battling one of the rarest forms of leukemia at 35, he decided to choose courage.

He spent six years with 36 of the world's top neuroscientists to learn the most cutting-edge science to reprogram the human brain for purpose, passion, and peak performance. He cracked the code on using fear and flow to maximize anyone's potential. And he shared this knowledge in the #5 Wall Street Journal Best-seller, [Fear is Fuel](#).

In this episode, Patrick takes us through his journey of leaving his fears behind to choose courage and how you too can stop being afraid so you can find your confidence to unleash your full potential.

Stop living in fear. Take that first step. Tune in now.

Top Quotes From This Episode

"Self-talk is the most important thing any athlete can do. It's the number one thing that influences our performance."

"Our brains are prediction engines and we're constantly trying to figure out the outcome of each event. What makes us scared is when things are unexpected or when there's an element of surprise that we didn't predict."

"The easy thing to do is to default to defense when really, all the possibility lies in the future and doing something different and getting out of your comfort zone. That's where growth, success, and happiness are."

"The more action you take, the more data you're going to get back."

"All your dreams. I guarantee it, are on the other side of fear."

Show Notes

This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:

- **Hero's journey (4:21):** Patrick shares his humble beginnings as a boy who lacked self-esteem and his dealings with fear; On trying to find his confidence through sports.
- **The turning point (8:00):** Patrick relives what he calls his "First death": the toxic phase of his life and the day he discovered his illness that changed his life.
- **Stoic notion (11:17):** With his kids' future in mind, Patrick made a shift in his mindset and started to face his fears by visualizing the healing in his body, which was the same mental training he learned at the Olympic training center.
- **Imagining the worst (13:43):** While the visualization technique healed him, conversely, it was also one of the factors why Patrick got sick.

Check out his book, [Fear Is Fuel](#), where he talks more about the power of visualization.

- **Visualization technique (15:33):** Patrick on his visualization training as an athlete.
- **Premeditation of Evil (17:39):** To overcome fear, practice what the Stoics call the "Premeditation of Evil" or imagining all the horrible things that go wrong and how you'd respond to them.
- **Face your fears (19:58):** Patrick on overcoming his fear of flying.
- **[Fear is Fuel](#) (23:07):** Knowing even just a little bit about neuroscience and how the brain works can help you discover how you can use fear as your fuel.

Patrick gives us a short lesson about our brain activity that's responsible for our fears and how you can leverage these fear signals.

- **Replace judgment with curiosity (28:15):** All the possibilities lie outside of your comfort zone. When you choose courage as your default, you open yourself to opportunities and growth.

What's an action item the listener can take in the next 24-48 hours? (33:21)

- *Breathing Exercise (Four by Fours):* Breathe in for a count of four, hold it in for a count of four, then breathe out for another count of four. Do this for three to four minutes.
- *Replace judgment with curiosity:* Try and count the number of times in a day you make judgments and see yourself in just that awareness, then think, how can I be curious about that?
- *Take action:* Do something very quickly. Don't wait nor hesitate because once you do something, you get data back. And the more data you get back, the richer your decisions become.
- *Cold Shower:* Take a cold shower three minutes a day.

List of Resources Mentioned in the Episode

Patrick Sweeney's ["Fear Is Fuel: The Surprising Power to Help You Find Purpose, Passion, and Performance"](#)

["Fear is Fuel" audiobook](#)

[What I learned from 100 days of rejection | Jia Jiang \(TED\)](#)

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Other Episodes Referenced

[#297 100 Days of Rejection: What One Man Learned About Fear and Failure](#)

Guest Website and Social

Patrick Sweeney

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