



# JIM HARSHAW JR.

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## *Revealing Failure as the Path to Success*

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #314

**Ron Friedman, Ph.D.**

Ron Friedman, Ph.D. is an award-winning social psychologist, best-selling author, and one of America's leading voices on the Science of Success and Work/Life Mastery.

He has served on the faculty of the University of Rochester and has consulted for political leaders, nonprofits, and many of the world's most recognized brands. Popular accounts of his research have appeared in major newspapers, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Boston Globe, the Globe and Mail, the Guardian, as well as magazines such as Harvard Business Review and Psychology Today.

In this episode of the Success Through Failure podcast, Ron reveals how Reverse Engineering paved the way to success for the likes of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Tim Ferriss, and J.K. Rowling, just to name a few.

He also delves into the topic of creativity vs originality— which begs the question: Do you need to be a creative genius to come up with something revolutionary like Apple's Mac and Microsoft's Windows?

There are so many practical tactics to take away from this episode that you surely don't wanna miss! Tune in now!

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

*"Measurement begets performance."*

*"You don't need to be a complete original in order to be creative."*

*"Take risks but don't put everything on the line. Do it intelligently."*

*"If you want to have that mindset of curiosity and reverse engineering, the first step is to collect and have an eye for greatness. You're not going to become great unless you identify what greatness looks like.*

*"If you start reverse engineering, you can accelerate your success by learning from the best, templating it, and starting to apply it to succeed faster."*

## **Show Notes**

**This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:**

- **A closer look (4:12):** Ron gives us a glimpse of his book, ["Decoding Greatness"](#)

*Reverse Engineering:* Finding extraordinary examples in your field and then working backward to figure out how they were created.

- **How to Reverse Engineer? (6:07):** Ron shares some Reverse Engineering tactics that successful people from different fields utilize.
- **Return of Investment (ROI) (8:45):** What you can gain from reverse engineering your way to success.
- **Study the greats! (11:53):** How "collecting" can help you elevate your performance
  - *Spot the Difference:* Comparing materials/references to see what elements made them effective
  - *Reverse Outlining:* Take a finished piece then work backward to create an outline that you can use as a template
- **Scoreboard Principle (14:59):** Create metrics on your behaviors and your outcomes to find the levers that will take your performance to the next level. *"Anything that you measure, you're likely to improve on."*
- **Learn it from Obama and Miranda (19:44):** Ron shares how former US President Barack Obama used Reverse Engineering to improve his public speaking style.

Similarly, Broadway hit-maker Lin-Manuel Miranda used this tactic to create award-winning musicals like "In the Heights" and "Hamilton."
- **Creativity vs Originality (24:11):** The history of the personal computer: How Steve Jobs and Bill Gates took inspiration from Xerox's invention to create revolutionary technologies: Apple's Macintosh (Mac) and Microsoft's Windows.

- **To risk or not to risk (31:01):** Take intelligent risks in a way that failure has a very minor cost to ensure that the risks you take actually pay off.

Always experiment and test— whether it's for business or your personal life— because that's where you'll learn.

**What's an action item the listener can take in the next 24-48 hours? (36:54)**

- Start collecting. When you come across extraordinary examples— it can be an email, a website, a proposal, or a presentation— collate and store them. Use them as your inspiration and template.

**Tell me about a time when you failed. (40:16)**

- Ron relives the time when he wanted to become a musician and how reverse engineering could have helped him realize that dream.

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

Ron Friedman's books

["The Best Place to Work: The Art and Science of Creating an Extraordinary Workplace"](#)

["Decoding Greatness: How the Best in the World Reverse Engineer Success"](#)

Nancy Duarte's TED Talk: [The Secret Structure of Great Talks](#)

Sir Ken Robinson's TED Talk: [Do School Kill Creativity?](#)

Lin-Manuel Miranda's ["In the heights" \(movie\)](#) and ["Hamilton" \(Broadway musical\)](#)

["Keeping Up with the Kardashians"](#)

Tim Ferriss' [The 4-Hour Workweek: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich](#)

J.K. Rowling's ["Harry Potter" \(books series\)](#)

Robert Galbraith's first crime novel: ["The Cuckoo's Calling"](#)

### **Want to talk to a personal performance coach?**

Want to consider executive life coaching? Claim a spot on Jim's calendar for your free one-time clarity call: [JimHarshawJr.com/APPLY](http://JimHarshawJr.com/APPLY)

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

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## **Other Episodes Referenced**

[#246 & #247 Interview with Tim Ferriss: Secret \(or Not-So-Secret\) Routines, Experiments, and Absurd Questions from a World-Class Performer](#)

## **Guest Website and Social**

Ron Friedman  
[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)

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