

## Coaching Tip: How to Cope with Failure

Welcome to my coaching tip of the week on how to cope with failure.

So, I was going to orient this tip for your clients but I quickly remembered that being a good coach is living it to give it so please self-apply these tips, all my tips in fact, before applying with others. That way you can smooth out any streaks and add your individuality and uniqueness to it.

We all know, at least intellectually, that successful people fail – we’ve heard the stories like Oprah Winfrey being fired because she wasn’t “fit for television”, how J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter Books, was rejected 12 times by publishers and of course, Steve Jobs’ big fail with Next computer and other defunct products. Great artists, authors, innovators, musicians and yes, coaches encounter mistakes and failures along the way in order to figure out what works and what doesn’t – but if you’ve ever failed before, it can hurt like hell and those Oprah and Rowling reminders are just plain annoying. Am I right?

So, what do you do when you experience a failure? It could be a retreat that didn’t sell, a product that failed to launch or a gorgeous website that no one came to visit except Aunt Sally or your kid who can barely read. First, I always recommend that you give yourself plenty of space to allow your feelings to live, breath and expand. Really allow yourself to feel your disappointment all the way through. That’s really the hardest part. We habitually squirm and try to wiggle out of those negative feeling states – thank the reptilian brain for its flight or fight response. It’s really fighting for its life! Brooke Castillo once said to me that feeling your feelings all the way through is directly proportionate to how successful you’ll be. Tweet that! That’s when it

sunk in that there are no shortcuts to anyplace worth going– we all go through our own unique ring of fire especially when we’re setting goals that our outside our comfort zone like building a successful revenue stream as a Coach.

So, once you’ve pulled the stinger out of the fail, and the swelling has gone down a bit, here are some questions that may help you rediscover that you are stronger, braver and more resilient than you think – you may just find yourself just a wee more confident to pull yourself out of the wreckage and try again.

1. First, identify an experience, an area of your life or an event that was challenging for you and for which you are proud (delivering your baby, learning how to speak Mandarin Chinese, bungee jumping off a ridiculously high building). Got it?
2. How did you feel before you achieved this accomplishment? (what were you feeling and where were you feeling it? – in other words, identify both the physical and emotional sensations)
3. Did this experience push you beyond what you thought you were capable of? (That’s a yes if you had a baby while learning Mandarin Chinese)
4. Name at least 3 things that you would have been denied if it weren’t for this experience?
5. What were the key ingredients that you think are responsible for achieving that thing you’re proud of? (patience, perseverance, deep practice, I didn’t give up, I asked for help, I was resourceful)
6. What’s your current pain point or problem? (You built a website and you have no clients)
7. How is the experience you’re proud of just like your current pain point or problem? Consider each ingredient you identified in Question 5 and apply it to your current problem or painful experience. For example, if you don’t have any clients, what key ingredients can you take from question 5, the things that were responsible for your accomplishment and immediately apply – maybe asking for help from someone who is masterful

at attracting clients or realizing that building trust with prospective prospects takes time and cultivation)

At best, this exercise serve as a reminder that the answers to your unique problems are always within you when you have the courage to look for them. At the very least, it will help you to remember that uncomfortable feelings like fear, confusion and uncertainty always precedes doing the hard stuff, the stuff you're ultimately proud of, and can be a balm for what often feels like a very bad sunburn

Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset*, (which I recommend you read) always reminds me that before I do something hard or challenging to set an intention to “get better”, noticing where I'm improving and learning rather than setting a goal of “being good” – proving that I am smart, capable and talented. If your motive is to self-validate, your confidence will likely take a nose dive when you make a mistake or fail but if your goal is to improve, to develop your skills and abilities, chances are your confidence will increase and let's not forget that the journey will be that much more enjoyable – I mean isn't that why we do this thing called coaching?

Try this exercise with yourself next time you hit a bump in the road or use it with your clients and let me know how it works.

Cheers,

Jackie