



FIND LESSONS IN FAILURE

At this time of year, many young people are celebrating their high school successes and looking forward to the future. Encouraged by well-wishers, they head out into the real world, hoping to avoid failures and disappointments that might trip them up.

Yet failing might not be such a bad thing, some experts say. Paul Tough, author of the upcoming book *The Success Equation*, argues that failure is actually a key component of success. Writing in *The New York Times*, Tough says although parents strive to provide for and protect their kids, “We all know—on some level, at least—that what kids need more than anything is a little hardship: some challenge, some deprivation that they can overcome, even if just to prove to themselves that they can.”

Fear of failure can paralyze young people, leaving them incapable of making decisions or stuck in the past, ruminating on past screw-ups. So it’s essential to embrace mistakes and communicate that messing up is acceptable and even valuable.

Failure isn’t fun, but it builds character, teaches patience, and helps us rely on God, not ourselves. Only through our imperfections can we see God’s 100%-reliable perfection. Thankfully, he has perfect, eternal plans for each of us imperfect people.

THE VIEW

- In a Gallup Poll about top fears, teenagers listed “not succeeding in life/being a failure” as No. 4 (after terrorists, spiders, and death). Specific responses included fear of “making mistakes that will mess up my life,” “not measuring up,” “not achieving the goals I’ve set for myself,” and “not leaving a mark.”
- Researchers looking into how college students react to setbacks discovered that effective coping strategies include acceptance, humor, and positive reframing. Ineffective strategies, which leave people feeling unsatisfied, include denial, self-blame, venting, disengaging, and (surprisingly) social support.

TIPS >>>

Brian Berry, author of the upcoming book *You Stink! (Group)*, uses these questions to process failure and criticism:

- **Who’s the source?** Not all criticism is created equal. If it’s an anonymous comment, throw it out. If it’s from a friend, sit down and chase it to the end of full understanding, knowing he or she cares about you.
- **Why is this so hurtful?** Self-awareness requires soul-level digging. Are you lacking affirmation? Are you playing the comparison game and falling short? Take time to figure out why you’re hurting.
- **Why is this person upset with me?** After considering the source and what’s going on inside you,

start assessing the situation. That likely means asking someone for clarity. It will certainly mean prayerful evaluation. And it might mean asking a trusted friend for a third viewpoint. Understanding motives helps you move beyond hurt toward understanding

- **Am I trying to please God or people?** This deserves a pause for honest exploration (see Galatians 1:10). Until you get your priorities straight and seek God’s insight, comments and failures will hold more weight than they should.

Next time you hear “You stink!” in your head or ears, know you’re in good company. Let’s embrace the truth about our weaknesses and, like the apostle Paul and his “thorn,” keep our faces wide open to God as we muddle our way through life’s potholes.

PONDER THIS

- What role have failures and disappointments played in your life—and in your successes?
- How have you encouraged your teenagers to persevere in life, despite obstacles that come their way?
- How can you tell—and show—your kids that failure is acceptable?





BLESSED BY FAILURE

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Brandon Schmidt

Everyone has ups and downs, successes and failures. Failure is a part of life, though it's usually frowned on by our results-driven culture.

Rather than repressing those painful experiences, it's important to not only embrace failures but to learn from them. Our mishaps and mistakes are valuable learning tools. A professor once told me, "I hope you aren't cursed by success but rather blessed by failure." He realized the importance of failure as a chance to improve. Here are four ways to embrace failure:

1. Learn what *not* to do. When asked about his repeated failures in developing the incandescent light bulb, Thomas Edison replied, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

2. Recheck priorities. Consider the time and effort you put into various activities and whether you need to re-evaluate what's most important to you.

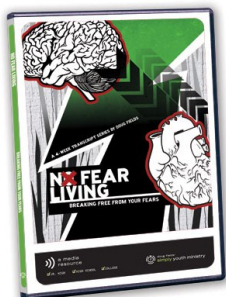
3. Prepare for the future. Every day is a new learning experience. Some days may seem like monotony, while others are downright dreadful. Yet every single day is one more day God has to mold you into his servant. The lessons you learn now will certainly help you later. They'll also help you help other people.

4. Depend on God. If life were all about us, we'd be in trouble. Use failure to evaluate your relationship with God and make sure he has prime position in your life. One professor also told me, "It's not about you, stupid." I knew he was right about the

second part, but I've been learning the first part. Life isn't about me; it's all about God. Failure helps me make sure it's all about him.

Don't be deterred by mistakes; embrace them. Don't be discouraged, but be blessed by failures.
—SimplyYouthMinistry.com

RESOURCE



No Fear Living (Simply Youth Ministry) by Doug Fields contains transcripts of four messages about fear and failure. The second message examines how to "fail forward," letting God help us move into the abundant, full life he desires for us.

BIBLE FOCUS

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment.

Romans 5:3-5

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

MAINSTREAM MUSIC



NICKI MINAJ

Background: Born Onika Tanya Maraj in Trinidad and Tobago, Minaj moved to New York at age 5. To cope with a rough home life, she created alter egos—one of which is Nicki Minaj. (“Fantasy was my reality,” she says.) The alter egos manifest in her songs; a favorite is Roman Zolanski, her gay “twin brother” who lives in her and emerges when she’s angry. The R&B/hip-hop singer is also known for making bold fashion statements.

Albums: *Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded* (2012), *Pink Friday* (2010)

What Minaj Says: “One day, you’re going to look back and think, ‘Wait a minute, did I really lose my life clubbing and miss out on a moment where I could’ve been building myself as a woman and having something to offer my children?’ We got so many girls right now having children [who] don’t even know the first thing to say to a child.”

Explore: You can watch Minaj’s videos on YouTube, but beware: Her songs are filled with profanity, sexual language, and sexual images.

CHRISTIAN MUSIC



KJ-52

Background: Hip-hop artist KJ-52 has been dropping beats for 12 years, steadily increasing his influence and notoriety. The numbers in his name refer to Jesus’ miracle of feeding the multitude with five loaves and two fish. KJ-52 has won four Dove Awards, and his songs have been featured on numerous TV shows.

Albums: *Dangerous* (2012), *Five-Two Television* (2009), *The Yearbook* (2007)

What KJ-52 Says: “The theme [of the new album] is God is calling us to live dangerously for him. We have to be careful that we don’t give into the world, which is like drinking poison out of a gold cup. But as Christians, we can’t go along with the status quo or play it safe. There’s no room for laziness or complacency.”

Explore: Many of the singer’s videos are posted at kj52.com, and his albums are available on Spotify.

MOVIES

Movie: *The Avengers*

Genre: Action, Adventure

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: Nick Fury, director of the highly secret government agency S.H.I.E.L.D., assembles the world’s greatest superheroes to fight off an otherworldly threat.

Our Take: Marvel’s superhero movies are generally teen-friendly, with little violence and a minimum of coarse language. Joss Whedon is a great writer, so film fans have high hopes. This movie will likely feature snappy dialogue and big-time action.

Movie: *Men in Black 3*

Genre: Action, Comedy

Rating: PG-13

Synopsis: In this sequel to the smash hit originals, Will Smith’s Agent J travels back in time to save his former partner—and the entire planet. Josh Brolin is a dead ringer as the young Tommy Lee Jones.

Our Take: The smash-hit originals were full of interesting characters, funny situations, and Will Smith’s cool-guy attitude. Because that winning formula likely won’t change, expect some foul language and cartoonish, sci-fi violence.

For more media discussions and ideas, go to

www.MinistryandMedia.com.

VIDEO GAMES



Minecraft—This game revolves around one simple principle: survival. It’s split into day and night cycles. During the day, players gather resources, search for ore, dig holes, fish, and plant crops. Players spend the nights indoors, mining underground tunnels, building tools, and being chased by monsters. What makes the game unique is the elaborate structures people have built—including the Cathedral of Notre Dame and the Taj Mahal. *Minecraft* is a springboard for ingenuity and creativity. (Rating pending.)

Max Payne 3—This gritty, run-and-gun sequel is now being handled by Rockstar Games, the same studio behind the violent “Grand Theft Auto” series and *Red Dead Redemption*. The series is notable for its “bullet-time” sequence, where time slows down and you can see bullets tear through enemies. (Rated M.)

MAY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
		<p>May 6th from Noon to 3pm Youth Girls Baby Shower for Debi at Carol Gremillion's Home - 3214 Spring Trail., S 77479 RSVP to Carol at carol@executiveliving.com. Lunch provided. Bring a swimsuit if your daughter would like to swim.</p>				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>Baby Shower – noon to 3pm</p>  <p>Downpour Dessert Theater 6-8pm</p>						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p>Mother's Day</p> <p>Late Deadline for Summer Camp \$350 with \$100 Deposit Click Here</p>			<p>Last Surge of the 2011-2012 School Year</p>			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<p>May 20th- Senior Recognition Sunday</p>				<p>Last Day of School FBCA</p>		
<p>May 20th — Late Deadline for World Changers —2 spots are open now! Email Terri to register at thoneycutt@sugarlandbaptist.org</p>						
27	28	29	30	31		
	<p>Memorial Day</p>			<p>Last Day of School FBISD and Lamar</p>		