

Episode 0010

Failure as Feedback

Show Transcript



Presented by Dr. Gala Gorman
© All rights reserved, MetaComm Media LLC

00:05

Dr. Gala Gorman: If you've got something that you'd really like to take on . . . how do you tune out the peanut gallery and just get started?

00:19

Announcer: You've tuned to Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. Here, you'll find Sage Advice for taking inspired action. Awareness is the key. With this key, it's easier to navigate in the human world with all of its detours. It requires that we get to know ourselves intimately. If you choose to join us, this just might make you an Awareness Addict . . . alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

00:48

Dr. Gala Gorman: This is Episode 10. In this episode, we're going to learn to celebrate failure. It is failure that precedes growth and development . . . and success. As you develop awareness, you're going to have ideas that call you to bigger and better things. To answer the call, you need to get comfortable with failure . . . even celebrate it. I'm Dr. Gala Gorman. Are you willing to experience some discomfort with me? I hope so. The payoff could be HUGE!

01:20

I found this article from the Harvard Business Review talking about strategies to use for learning from failure. This section of the article was really awesome. I wanted to share it with you. The little subheading says, "Intelligent failures at the frontier."

What they're talking about here is differentiating between good failure and bad failure. It says, "Failures in this category can rightly be considered 'good,' because they provide valuable new knowledge that can help an organization leap ahead of the competition and ensure its future growth." This is why the Duke University professor of management, Sim Sitkin, calls them intelligent failures. "They occur when experimentation is necessary: when

answers are not knowable in advance because this exact situation hasn't been encountered before and perhaps never will be again."

02:25

Some examples that he gives are, "Discovering new drugs, creating a radically new business, designing an innovative product, and testing customer reactions in a brand-new market. These," he says, "are tasks that require intelligent failures. 'Trial and error' is a common term for [this] kind of experimentation [...] but it is a misnomer, because 'error' implies that there was a 'right' outcome in the first place."

It says here, "At the frontier, the right kind of experimentation produces good failures quickly. Managers who practice it can avoid the 'unintelligent' failure of conducting experiments at a larger scale than necessary."

03:10

Here is how it says we should analyze failure ... I think this is really instructive because whether the failure is happening in our personal lives or at the business level, the fundamentals are the same. The article goes on to say, "Once a failure has been detected, it's essential to go beyond the obvious and superficial reasons for it to understand the root causes. This requires the discipline—better yet, the enthusiasm—to use sophisticated analysis to ensure that the right lessons are learned and the right remedies are employed. The job of leaders is to see that their organizations don't just move on after a failure but stop to dig in and discover the wisdom contained in it."

04:00

This is really important. I've seen this in my own business when I ran the accounting firm. And, I see this readily when confronted with failure and trying to use this triage approach. It says, "Why is failure analysis often shortchanged? Because examining our failures in depth is emotionally unpleasant and can chip away at our self-esteem. Left to our own devices, most of us will speed through or avoid failure analysis altogether. Another reason is that analyzing organizational failures requires inquiry

and openness, patience, and a tolerance for causal ambiguity. Yet managers typically admire and are rewarded for decisiveness, efficiency, and action—not thoughtful reflection. That is why the right culture is so important.”

05:06

What culture are you establishing? If you own a business, do you have this sort of culture? I used to frustrate the heck out of people at our accounting firm when a mistake would happen. They just wanted to gloss over it and say, “I’ll fix it. It’s fixed!” I would insist that it’s not fixed until we have done this deep examination into what created the problem in the first place. Often, when I forced them to go through this, we’d discover that we needed to change the way we did things. Or, there really was a better way ... or some underlying cause needed to be addressed.

The same thing is true for your personal life. If something is not working ... if you keep set a goal or making a change and it’s not working, there is some underlying root cause that keeps sabotaging your progress. Doing this sort of self-reflection and examination is what will ultimately lead to your success.

06:23

Let’s take a moment to develop awareness. This is something you can practice anywhere . . . anytime. Begin by noticing where your breath is landing in your body? Are you feeling your breath in your chest? Is it expanding your rib cage? Or, even your belly?

Just become aware of your breathing.

Now, we’re going to breathe intentionally. We’ll start by breathing deeply into our belly. Breathe deeply . . . expanding your belly. Notice how it feels for your belly to expand. Then, pull your abdomen in so that all of the stale air gets pushed out on the exhale.

Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply . . . all the way into your belly. Expand your belly. And again, breathe out and flatten your tummy. Squeeze all that air out.

Next, we'll move the breath up to our rib cage. Intentionally expand your ribcage with the breath. It may feel like your ribs are stretching out on both sides . . . or you may feel it expanding your back. Just notice how that feels. You're stretching your lungs to the side and creating flexibility in your ribs. Take another breath into your ribcage.

Now, let's go back to how you were probably breathing when we started this practice. Breathe into your upper chest. You can feel your breastbone raise and lower with the breath. Notice how it feels to take a shallow breath now that we have expanded the breath into our belly and rib cage.

We have sent a clear message to our brain and nervous system that we can take control. Let's use this feeling of empowerment to practice Aware Appreciation.

What is ONE BIG THING that you appreciate right now? And, keep this in mind as you notice more things to appreciate as you move through your day.

08:41

If you're like most humans, failing was discouraged ... maybe not even just discouraged, it might have had a big spotlight shone on it that said, "Don't do this." We would try to hide it, or worse, avoid it by not trying. We're going to turn that around and learn to celebrate failure. It is failure that precedes growth, development, and success. As you develop awareness, you're going to have ideas that call you to bigger and better things. To answer the call, you need to make failure your friend.

09:20

Why don't we want to fail? As children, we weren't afraid to fail. In fact, just to learn to walk we had to be willing to fail a lot. Get up over and over again and do a face plant. Just learning to eat was one of the most painful experiences. I

don't have children of my own. But, even with my niece and nephew and other people's children, watching them learn how to feed themselves was a painful experience for me. They weren't experiencing pain. They were enjoying getting food everywhere and making a complete mess in the process. This is a great example.

10:13

I'm totally crazy watching this happen and trying to minimize the mess. Trying to reduce the failure, while this little child is just enjoying the process of learning, growing, and trying something new. This is how it happens. We get conditioned to not want to fail. I wanted to just put the child in a straightjacket and feed them until they have good enough hand-eye coordination to be able to do it themselves without making a mess. But, that is not the way it happens. We've got to get our hands messy. We've got to really do the work to learn to do things ourselves.

The criticism that we're used to getting from the outside gets internalized. And, we don't want to hear it. We don't even want to hear ourselves echo that we suck at something. So, we don't even try, we just say, "I can't do that. I'm not good at that." We hold ourselves down and keep ourselves in our comfortable or pleasantly uncomfortable little box. We often say that we really aspire to bigger and better things. We want more out of life.

11:40

As you start practicing Aware Appreciation ... what do I say? Awareness plus Appreciation equals Opportunities. Those opportunities are going to call us out of our comfortably uncomfortable little environment. And, we're probably going to have to learn some new things. Or, at a minimum, get a lot better at things that we already are familiar with.

One of the things that I've heard a number of times ... I have no idea if this is true but it makes sense to me ... I've heard that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to become really proficient at some skill. If you want to play the piano,

10,000 hours of practice. You want to get good at a sport, 10,000 hours of practice.

12:39

There may be an element of raw talent that contributes to getting really good at something, but what makes the person with that raw talent different is not how much they've practiced. Because they practice that same 10,000 hours like anyone else. The difference is that they probably enjoyed it more. Because it was something that they just naturally felt like they were good at and wanted to engage in.

If you've got something that you'd really like to take on ... how do you tune out the peanut gallery and just get started? 10,000 hours seems like a tremendous amount of time when you are starting out at 0, 10, 20, or 50 hours. But, if you think about it ... we work 2,000 hours a year typically, if you work a 40-hour per week job, Monday through Friday. In a week, there is 24x7 ... let's just call it 150 hours per week. In 10 weeks ... that's not even three months ... and that's 15,000 hours.

14:00

Obviously you are not going to be able to practice whatever it is you want to learn 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. But, we all know that there's time that we are not channeling to good use. So, this 10,000 hours can accumulate pretty quickly if you really put your mind to it. Also, keep in mind that by the time you get to 10,000 hours, you should be pretty good at something. But, there was improvement every step of the way. You may have reached some points where you plateaued ... you didn't feel like you were really getting better. But, if you stayed the course, then you saw that improvement happen and things began to take off.

14:54

It's time that you acknowledge what holds you back ... what your obstacles really are. You want to think that it's not enough free time. But really, it is more the voice in your head that keeps holding you back, telling you that it's not even worth trying because you are never going to put in the

work required. You are never going to be good enough to stand next to somebody who is good at what you'd like to take on. Just quieting that voice in your head and saying, "I don't know how good I'm going to be 10,000 hours into this, but this is really something that's important to me. I'm never going to know how great I'm going to be until I get started and then stick with it."

15:57

One of the other things that I like to talk about is divine timing. For many of us, we've had dreams that have persisted over the years, throughout the course of our lives. At a certain point, that dream will rise up in us and be so vivid and so loud, knocking so hard on our door, that we just can't quiet it and ignore it any longer. That is the time, if you haven't done it in the past, to actually answer the call. Get that 10,000 hours started. Maybe you already had 1,000 of the 10,000 hours and get started on 1,001. Just know that if you don't answer that call, there are negative consequences. Some of those negative consequences could include even becoming ill.

We internalize our disappointments. I don't want that for you or for me. It's important that we pursue our dreams and that we really embrace failures. Because that's what's it is going to take to really put ourselves out there and be all that we can be.

17:29

What's your takeaway for today? One little "aha" and your time will be well spent.

When I started talking to you about this topic today, one of the lines in the article reminded us that it's not just discipline but enthusiasm that needs to be applied when we're examining our failures. I just thought I would share a few quotes with you from people that, if you study this topic at all, you know they are people who we consider to be uber successful and who have been very public about how much failure they've have to endure in order to become a success.

From Henry Ford, "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently." We have to learn from our mistakes.

From Thomas A. Edison, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." For every hour you put in, you're going to learn something. Something's going to need to be tweaked. And in the next hour, you're going to apply that and see what comes out of it.

Lastly, Albert Einstein, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." We know that's not what's on board for us. We are all about pursuing our dreams and taking hold and running with any opportunity that's presented to us.

19:11

Question:

I am 42 and living with my parents. I am not feeling too accomplished but I needed a place to transition. I just got divorced for the second time. It has me questioning just about everything about myself. I wanted to love and risk being intimate but, for some reason, I couldn't. Why am I repeating these relationship problems?

19:36

Dr. Gala Gorman: First, thanks for submitting your question. Divorce is one of the most stressful of life experiences. If it relieves some stress and pressure to live with your parents, that's a good thing. From your question, it sounds like you're doing some soul searching. That's also a good thing. A divorce is often referred to as a failed marriage so applying what you've learned in this episode will be helpful. As long as you are learning from your relationship experiences, you are making progress. Don't abort the process. There is much to be discovered about yourself and how you relate to the world and with other humans. It is at those times when we are in pain and feeling like a failure that the greatest opportunities for personal growth and development present themselves. To squeeze even more value out of this

experience, you might also amp up your appreciation practice. Remember Awareness + Appreciation = Opportunities. You can find the Quick Start Guide at AwarenessAddicts.com/AA.

20:52

Announcer: Are you ready to create an attitude adjustment? Practicing Aware Appreciation will make a positive difference. You can access the Aware Appreciation Worksheet by visiting AwarenessAddicts.com/AA. In just a few minutes a day, you'll stop negativity in its tracks . . . and gain some insight and awareness in the process.

Your feedback makes a difference. What part of this episode helped you the most? Join the Awareness Addicts Facebook group and share your thoughts. Make sure you leave a review wherever you've accessed the show. And, if you know others who could use some divine inspiration, share with them! Remember, all the links and resources are available at AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes. Don't waste another moment feeling confused and stuck. As an Awareness Addict, you're alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

21:48

Dr. Gala Gorman: You've probably heard the phrase, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." On the heels of this discussion where we've learned to embrace failure, why not just skip the planning and take things as they come? For starters, failure can be quite painful. And, we want to make sure we're squeezing all the value out of it if it is inevitable. So, while you can't plan for every possibility, planning IS critical to get the most out of every failure. In the next episode, I'm going to help you plan the right way. You don't want to miss it.

22:25

Announcer: This was Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. For more information and to find any resources mentioned in

this episode, visit AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes. Thank you for tuning in.

DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY/LIMIT OF LIABILITY

The author and publisher of this material have used their best efforts in its preparation. The author and publisher make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability, fitness or completeness of the contents. The information contained herein is strictly for educational purposes. Therefore, if you wish to apply ideas contained herein, you are taking full responsibility for your actions.

RecoverYES.com is a division of YES Unlimited LLC providing information, insight and inspiration to support self-help through coaching. Coaching is not a substitute for regular medical or psychological care. Coaching is not about disease or illness—rather, its focus is on healing and wellness.

No one is advised to discontinue or to avoid medical or psychotherapeutic treatment. There are cases where medical or psychotherapeutic treatment are advised. Don't use these techniques to try to solve a problem where your common sense would tell you it is inappropriate. Since the information is designed to support self-help, we cannot and will not take responsibility for what you do with it. You are required to take complete responsibility for your own well-being both during and after the use of our information and/or coaching sessions.

The author and publisher disclaim any warranties (express or implied). The author and publisher shall in no event be held liable to any party for any direct, indirect, punitive, special, incidental, or other consequential damages arising directly or indirectly from any use of this material which is provided "as is" and without warranties. This material is copyrighted by YES Unlimited LLC. No part of this material may be copied or changed in any format, sold, or used in any way other than what it outlined herein under any circumstances.