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# Resilience

Facing Down Rejection and Criticism on the Road to  
Success

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## Introduction

“Learn to succeed in spite of adversity”

- You will apply for opportunities and be rejected, perhaps many times
- When you do succeed in getting your work out there in the public, you will be criticized – sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly, and sometimes viciously
- Ken Langone, Co Founder of Home Depot – “What distinguishes the winners from the losers is the ability to turn adversity around: resilience and creativity”



## Why do Rejection and Criticism hurt so much?

- Maslow's hierarchy of human needs:
  - Physiological – oxygen, food, sleep
  - Safety – security, employment, shelter
  - Love & belonging – family, friendship
  - Esteem – self-esteem, confidence, respect
  - Self-actualization
- Belonging is clearly a need threatened by rejection
- Self-esteem is threatened by criticism



## Why You Need to Build Resilience?

- The list of people who succeed at the first attempt is very short
- The list of people is much longer who encounter rejection, criticism, disappointment, failure, and other setbacks before they gain a level of recognition and reward for their efforts
  - Somehow they manage to go on in spite of adversity, to learn from their mistakes, to improve their skills, and persist until they succeed
  - In order to do this you must develop a quality to bounce back - “RESILIENCE” / the ability to keep pursuing your goals in spite of adversity / driven by a passion



## A Simple but Powerful way to Develop Resilience

- Mindfulness – paying attention to your experiences / physical, mental, and emotional
  - Helps develop the psychological strength and flexibility that combine to produce resilience
  - You better understand and are more vividly aware of your thoughts and feelings – consequently, they don't affect you as much as before



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# REJECTION

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## Rejection

- It's normal – get used to it
  - Everybody gets rejected – even the best of the best
  - The best get rejected more because they put themselves out there more, take more chances, and pursue more opportunities
  - “Never let the fear of striking out get in your way” - Babe Ruth
- Make of list of your top five heroes
  - Read up on their careers – stories of rejection and perseverance in the face of adversity
  - How did they cope with rejection?



## Seven Guaranteed Ways to Make Rejection Worst

### 1. Taking it personally

- ❑ “I’m a failure”
- ❑ “I’m a loser”

### 2. Repetition

- ❑ Keep replaying the negative experience over and over again

### 3. Regret

- ❑ Make the best decision you can at the time, knowing you will make some bad decisions – go with your gut
- ❑ Regrets come when you look back and say, “I could have...I should have... and yet I was persuaded by someone or something else.”
- ❑ Hindsight is always 20:20



#### 4. Prediction

- ❑ Believing a rejection in the past is always a rejection in the future – “I’ll never succeed... I’m doomed to failure... What’s the point in trying again?”
- ❑ Instead – “Things will be different next time...If I learn the lesson and improve, I’ll have a better chance next time.”

#### 5. Comparison

- ❑ Up to a certain point comparison can be a good thing, inspiring you to emulate others’ success. But beyond that point it becomes a stick to beat yourself with
- ❑ Instead – “I’m competing with myself, no one else...will succeed on my own terms.”

#### 6. Just deserts

- ❑ You can carry on fantasizing about the world of just deserts. Or you can focus on the reality of your situation
- ❑ Easy to say “It’s so unfair...I deserve better than this!”
- ❑ Instead – I can do better than them...It feels unfair, but I have to deal with it.”



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## 7. Exaggeration

- What not to say – “This is the absolute worst...What a total disaster!”
- Instead – “Ok I failed again, but it’s not the end of the world... This is a big disappointment, but I’ve bounced back before, so I can do it again.”

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## Is The Prize Worth the Price?

- If you want to achieve something extraordinary with your life, then rejection is part of the price
- When you stop taking rejection personally and accept that it's part of the process, you start paying the price for success
- It's only worth paying the price if the ultimate prize is worth it



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## Find Your Tribe

- People who share your enthusiasm and build on your ideas
- When you find your tribe, you plug in to a powerhouse of resilience
- Who do you already know who shares your passion?
- Is there a local group or class dedicated to your passion?

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# CRITICISM

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## Criticism

- Different types of criticism:
  - Feedback –
    - May be a code word for criticism?  
- OR -
    - Any process that raises your awareness of your performance and helps you improve it
  - Constructive Criticism –
    - Positive or negative
    - An opinion which is expressed in a helpful way



- Destructive Criticism –
  - A definite opinion – they don't know what they are talking about, or they don't know how to express it properly – or both
  - Lack of perspective
  - Exaggerated
  - Disrespectful



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# Success

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## What Does Success Look Like To You?

- Personal fulfilment – want to do it for the pleasure and satisfaction
- Professional achievement – milestones you want to reach
- Financial targets – how much you want to earn / what to do with it
- Learning – skills, knowledge, experience, and wisdom you want to acquire
- Impact – the difference you want to make in the world and people in it

“Success is not necessarily the key to happiness.  
Happiness is usually the key to success. If you love what you are  
doing, you will probably be successful”



## How Much Do You Want It? Are You Ambitious?

- Your noble ambitions:
  - Your work?
  - Your business?
  - Your career?
  - Your life?
- Your ambitious purely for yourself – fame, status, and riches may corrupt you
- Primarily for your work, etc. – a noble ambition



## Leap Before You Look

- When I look back at all the leaps I've made, it's hard for me to regret any of them
- Sometimes the lessons they taught me were painful – but there was always a lesson, if I paid attention
- And each time I tasted success, it made the failures and disappointments worthwhile
- I can also think of a few times where I was faced with a leap but didn't have the courage. Those missed chances I do regret – because I'll never know what would have happened if I had seized them.