



HOW TO TAKE RISKS AND EMBRACE FAILURE WELL

EMBRACE – ACT – REFLCET

TRAINING
MORNING
MAY 2024



WELCOME

Welcome to How to Take Risks and Embrace Failure Well. We hope you enjoy our morning together. Let us know if there is anything we can do to help the morning work for you.

Overview of the Session

Risk, faith and foolishness	4
Fear and success	5
The importance of risk	7
How to learn from failure	8

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOOD ZOOM ENGAGEMENT

- **Please participate, don't just observe** Ask questions (use virtual hand or just dive in with a question), contribute your best insights.
- **Set aside distractions** Close down other programmes, resist the temptations of your phone/tablet, put out of reach other reading material.
- **Keep your video on throughout** It will help you be fully present, and will help others engage with you. A blank screen is rather dispiriting.
- **Don't mute your sound** It helps with the flow of interaction, and an occasional background noise actually makes it feel less artificial. However, if there is a lot of noise in your room, or you are meeting as a group in one place, please do mute.
- **Combat Zoom fatigue** Two things will help combat weariness. Hide your self view (right click on your own image and select hide self view) and take regular stretch breaks (every 20 minutes or so stand up, stretch, take a few deep breaths).
- **Be patient** At some point something will go wrong. Please be patient with us as we try to sort it out.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD INTERACTION

- **Learning together** We are all here to learn from God and one another. **Adopt a learning posture.**
- **Participate** Share your thoughts, insights and questions. Listen carefully to what others say. **Have an enquiring mind.** You'll get the most out of it if you do.
- **Confidentiality** What is said in the room cannot be shared outside the room attributed to anyone in the room. That makes it a safe place for us to be honest and share more deeply. **Choose honesty and openness.**
- **Reality check** It is always easy to become disconnected from reality in a training session, so please keep us connected with reality by taking us back to how things really are in your context. **Keep grounded.**
- **Next step** We will cover a lot of ground, but throughout our time together **be attentive** to what might be your next step following this morning's session. We will give you a chance to identify that at the end of the morning.

LEARNING TOOLS

We're using a Jamboard and a Padlet Board this morning, as well as some of the features in Zoom. They are fairly simple tools, but don't hesitate to ask if anything is unclear.

TIMINGS

9.30	Welcome and Session 1
10.45	Break
11.00	Session 2
12.30	End

Timings are for guidance only, apart from the end time. We will finish by 12.30.

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INTRODUCTION



ACTIVITY



Think about a time when you risked a lot and it didn't work out. What did you learn from the experience?

Think about a situation you're in at the moment where risk is involved. How are you feeling?

RISK, FAITH AND FOOLISHNESS



ACTIVITY



How does a study of the Scriptures shape our understanding of the relationship between risk, faith and foolishness? Use the Jamboard with your group number to capture your insights in preparation for feeding back to the wider group.

FEAR

Why we Fear Failure

IT'S A BLOW TO OUR EGO

FEAR OF OTHER'S RESPONSE

FEAR FAILURE MIGHT BE IRREVERSIBLE

FEAR FAILURE MIGHT BE TERMINAL

FEAR WE MIGHT LET GOD DOWN

FOR REFLECTION

What would you add to the list?



Faithfulness and Success

NUMBERS 20:3-4

40 years after a dramatic incident at Rephidim where God ordered Moses to strike the rock providing a parched people with water, Moses again faces a thirsty people. Bitter accusations are hurled against him verses 3-4. Moses and Aaron cry out to God and he gives them the instruction 'speak to that rock and before their eyes it will pour out water.'

In frustration at the people, and in anger Moses strikes the rock twice and water pours out. The people love him, and you can imagine Moses and Aaron doing a high five. But, although the perspective of earth is success, the perspective of heaven is very different. Moses had failed, because he struck the rock and didn't speak to it.

Key insight: possible to be successful in the eyes of the world but not to have been faithful to God. Therefore equally possible to be a 'failure' in eyes of world and a 'success' in eyes of God.

FAITHFULNESS IS...

Bible doesn't use language of success per se, but it does talk about faithfulness. What might that look like?

1. Staying close to Jesus, John 14

Obedience to God's word, knowing what God wants and doing it. One minister exploring this theme at a time of deep doubt about his ministry reflected 'We saw how success was equally possible for those in the most difficult of situations – for example those with small numbers or inadequate resources.'

2. Serving kingdom purposes

Following Jesus' example, we proclaim good news, heal

the sick, comfort the poor, work for justice. We avoid laziness. Matthew 5:14-20 in the parable of the talents two servants are commended 'Well done good and faithful slave', but the third is referred to as 'wicked and lazy'. There are times where like Paul we labour on even when exhausted.

3. Maintaining faith in God

Hebrews 11:6 'without faith impossible to please God.' i.e. we continue to believe he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. It is easy to lose faith because of the inner anxieties of our hearts.

4. Praying in all circumstances, 1 Thessalonians 5

We pray because we are asked to do so and because of what it does to us. Our lives like photographic plates; prayer is time exposure to God, and the more expose ourselves to him the more his image is imprinted on us. We also pray because of what it does to church; prayer brings God's power to bear.

5. Living holy lives

Can be fooled by success, because if not holy not really successful. Very easy to fall into entitlement mentality where we think we deserve certain things and rationalise misbehaviour.

6. Maintaining a good attitude

Two negative attitudes characterise ministerial failures: jealousy, revealed in how we respond when others do well or poorly; and cynicism, which undermines faith and hope.

7. Co-operating with God's mission agenda

As leader's our priority needs not be God's priority.

FOR REFLECTION

How do you view 'success' in your role? How does it relate to the biblical themes of faithfulness and fruitfulness?

THE IMPORTANCE OF RISK TAKING

‘One of the most dangerous cultures you can create is a culture dominated by the desire to avoid mistakes. Avoiding mistakes isn’t bad. The problem comes when avoiding mistakes becomes the dominant motivation – when you won’t try something because it might not work, or because no-one else has tried it before, or because people might not approve.’

Craig Hamilton

- Path to personal growth.
- Path to kingdom advancement.
- Path to developing others.

‘You might never fail on the scale I did, but some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case you fail by default.’

J.K.Rowling

FOR REFLECTION

What particular factors shape my relationship with risk?

What steps might I take in order to cultivate a more healthy attitude to risk-taking?

STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING FROM FAILURE

1. CREATE A PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT

2. GET FEEDBACK

3. DEVELOP A REFLECTIVE CULTURE

4. CULTIVATE OPENNESS

5. MAINTAIN REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF TRUE NATURE OF SUCCESS

6. RESIST BLAME

7. CONDUCT PRE-MORTEMS





EXERCISE

- To what extent do you treat failure (in yourself and in others) as an opportunity for learning?
- As you reflect on these seven strategies for learning, what other practices would you add?

FOR REFLECTION

What steps might I take in order to grow in these practices?

A Spectrum of Reasons for Failure

BLAMEWORTHY

DEVIANCE

An individual chooses to violate a prescribed process or practice.

INATTENTION

An individual inadvertently deviates from specifications.

LACK OF ABILITY

An individual doesn't have the skills, conditions, or training to execute a job.

PROCESS INADEQUACY

A competent individual adheres to a prescribed but faulty or incomplete process.

TASK CHALLENGE

An individual faces a task too difficult to be executed reliably every time.

PROCESS COMPLEXITY

A process composed of many elements breaks down when it encounters novel interactions.

UNCERTAINTY

A lack of clarity about future events causes people to take seemingly reasonable actions that produce undesired results.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

An experiment conducted to prove that an idea or a design will succeed fails.

PRAISEWORTHY

EXPLORATORY TESTING

An experiment conducted to expand knowledge and investigate a possibility leads to an undesired result.

Taken from [Amy Edmondson's article](#) for HBR.

RESOURCES

THE ONE TO READ

- Failure, Emma Ineson (SPCK).

TOP READS

- Failing Forward, John Maxwell (Nelson).
- Black Box Thinking, Matthew Syed (John Murray).
- Wisdom in Leadership, Craig Hamilton (Matthias Media)

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Strategies for Learning From Failure](#), HBR article by Amy Edmondson.
- Susan David's [TED talk](#) on emotional agility.
- [Facing Failure Well](#) article from Warwick University.



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How to Nurture a Faith Sharing Culture

An exciting and accessible new church resource to help leaders nurture a faith-sharing culture in their church, congregation, fresh expression or church plant. www.cpas.org.uk/faith-sharing.



Venture and Falcon Holidays

CPAS runs around 70 fun-filled holidays for 8-18 year olds each year. The holidays are run by volunteers, and if you are interested in helping on one or know a young person who would benefit from a great holiday with a focus on Jesus visit www.ventures.org.uk.



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