

**ATTITUDE:  
5. FAILING FORWARDS**

*I'VE MISSED MORE THAN 9000 SHOTS IN MY CAREER. I'VE LOST ALMOST 300 GAMES. 26 TIMES, I'VE BEEN TRUSTED TO TAKE THE GAME WINNING SHOT AND MISSED. I'VE FAILED OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN MY LIFE. AND THAT IS WHY I SUCCEED!  
MICHAEL JORDAN*



**COMPETITORS AT THE GLOUCESTER CHEESE ROLLING CONTEST ARE USED TO FAILING (OR FALLING) FORWARDS**



**IN THIS ACTIVITY WE USE THE METAPHOR TO REPRESENT THE IMPORTANCE OF FAILURE...**



**FAILING FORWARDS ACCELERATES YOUR PROGRESS, WHEREAS FAILING BACKWARDS, HALTS PROGRESS, TAKING YOU IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.**



**THIS ACTIVITY AIMS TO HELP YOU TO REFRAME YOUR FAILURES AND MISTAKES, SO THAT YOU CAN "FAIL FORWARDS" AND ACCELERATE YOUR PROGRESS TOWARDS SUCCESS.**

# BIG IDEA



- × American journalist and Author, Dan Coyle argues that mistakes are information.
- × He says that anyone who becomes brilliant at something, have got better quickly because they have made a lot of mistakes.
- × Also they have paid attention to the mistakes and learnt from them.
- × We all understand that failure is important for success.
- × However people have very different attitudes towards failure.
- × What is your attitude towards failure?



## 1. HATE FAILURE

Are you the type of person who hates failure?

Do you feel embarrassed or humiliated when you fail at something?

## 1. HATE FAILURE

Do you hide your mistakes or skip hard homework to avoid failure?

If this sounds like you, then you are currently "Failing Backwards"

You could be making much quicker progress if you can learn how to.....

## 2. EMBRACE FAILURE

Are you the type of person who understands the importance of failure?

Can you brush off embarrassment?

Do you actively seek out difficult challenges to test yourself knowing that you will probably fail?

## 2. EMBRACE FAILURE

Are you someone who is happy taking a bit of a risk?

If this sounds like you, then you are probably already failing forwards and learning from your mistakes.

### FAILING BACKWARDS

### FAILING FORWARDS

Blaming Others	→	Taking responsibility
Repeating the same mistake	→	Learning from each mistake
Expecting never to fail	→	Knowing failure is part of the process
Expecting to fail continually	→	Maintaining a positive attitude
Accepting tradition blindly	→	Challenging outdated assumptions
Being limited by past mistakes	→	Taking new risks
Thinking "I am a failure"	→	Believing something didn't work this time
Withdrawing effort	→	Persevering

**THE FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT FROM AN A LEVEL SPORT STUDENT, WHOM WE INTERVIEWED AFTER HER YR 13 MOCK EXAMS, AND ASKED HER TO DESCRIBE A RECENT FAILURE.**

**DO YOU THINK SHE IS FAILING BACKWARDS OR FORWARDS?**

Had a complete mental block in Paper 2 of the PE theory exam. I forgot all my Biomechanics work and then, like always I ran out of time in the Physiology section. There's no point to Biomechanics, I hate it. My trouble is I'm rubbish at Maths, so I won't get a good grade in this part of the exam anyway.

Totally messed up my predicted grade now (an E) so definitely won't get into Leeds Uni to do Sports Science, I'll have to go through clearing. Not sure if Uni is for me anymore anyway.

**DID YOU PICK UP ANY OF THE TYPICAL "FAILING BACKWARDS" STATEMENTS, I.E. BLAMING OTHERS, REPEATING THE SAME MISTAKE, THINKING "I'M A FAILURE", ETC**

**DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS STUDENT TO "RE-FRAME" HER FAILURE?**

I am disappointed that I failed the PE exam, but these things happen. I know I didn't revise enough, especially Biomechanics, which I have always struggled with. I need to look at the feedback and really focus on this now. If I speak to my tutor and go over loads of past questions, I will be able to pass that section, and get through it quicker. I am strong on Physiology but always run out of time so need to do some questions under exam conditions to practice. Not overly concerned about the predicted grade, as long as I get a B I should still get enough UCAS points for Leeds. If not there are loads of different options for me, I should look at some other Unis and go to a couple of open days before making a decision, I could even think about taking a year out, I have loads of options!

**HERE IS A STATEMENT THAT WE HELPED HER PUT TOGETHER FOLLOWING HER DISAPPOINTING MOCK EXAM....**

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**CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO WAYS OF APPROACHING THE FAILURE?**

**...AND HOW THIS APPROACH WILL PRODUCE MUCH MORE POSITIVE RESULTS MOVING FORWARD.**

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**...IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED, THIS STUDENT MANAGED TO PASS HER A LEVEL PE WITH A C GRADE.**

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**SHE DID GET TO LEEDS.... BUT NOT THE UNIVERSITY.**

**INSTEAD SHE WENT TO LEEDS BECKETT TO STUDY SPORT AND EXERCISE THERAPY.**

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**SHE'S NOW "FAILED FORWARDS" ALL THE WAY TO AMERICA WHERE SHE IS LIVING AND WORKING AS A SPORTS THERAPIST.**

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**NOW OVER TO YOU.**

**USING A TABLE, LIKE THE ONE ON THE NEXT SLIDE, THINK OF A RECENT FAILURE, E.G. RECENT TEST, ESSAY OR HOMEWORK. DESCRIBE IT IN A PARAGRAPH...**

**...HAVE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE TEACHER FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED. WHAT AREAS OF WEAKNESSES DO THEY PICK OUT? MAKE SOME NOTES, REPHRASING INTO YOUR OWN WORDS...**

**...FINISH BY MAKING A SIMPLE LIST,  
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO  
DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?**

**REMEMBER:  
ADAPT YOUR THINKING USING THE  
POSITIVE "FAILING FORWARDS"  
STATEMENTS, WHILE AVOIDING ALL THE  
FAILING BACKWARDS STATEMENTS.**

**A RECENT FAILURE:**

**FEEDBACK RECEIVED:**

**NEXT TIME I NEED TO...**

### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

- × Do any of the "Failing Backwards" comments particularly resonate with you?
- × Are any of them things you say or do regularly?
- × If you had to pick one that you need to stop doing most which would it be? (Your teacher might share one of theirs...)
- × Think carefully what you might be able to say or do instead?
- × Write down your ideas, or put them in the notes on your phone.