

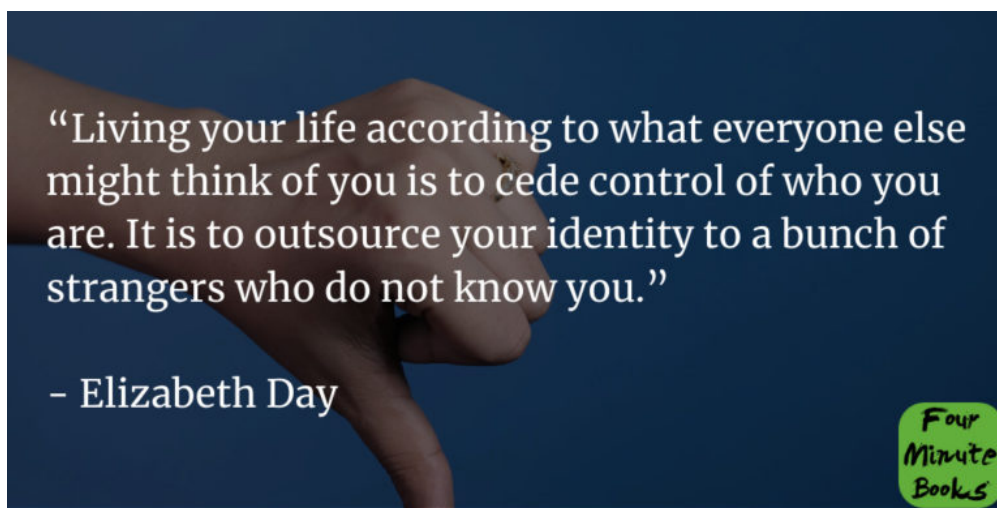
How To Fail Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *How To Fail* shows the surprising benefits of going through a difficult time through the experiences of the author, Elizabeth Day, including the failures in her life that she's grateful for and how they've helped her grow, uncovering why we shouldn't be so afraid of failure but instead embrace it.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



There are countless books out there about how to succeed. But what about books about how to fail? Let's face it: every one of us will fail at some point or other in life. So why not learn how to make the best of it?

How to Fail: Everything I've Ever Learned From Things Gone Wrong by Elizabeth Day is exactly that. She gives an honest guide on how to get through the hardest times in life. But that's not all— she will also teach you why failure is a *good* thing.

You heard that right. She reveals that our failures teach us some of the most important lessons in life— like we are, what we want, and how we can improve. In the end, how we learn from the painful experiences in life can turn our supposed mess-ups into successes.

Here are the 3 of the most helpful lessons this book taught me

1. Your twenties are a great time to mess up and learn from your mistakes.
2. Failing in a relationship can teach you a lot about yourself.
3. You can be successful and also experience failure in other areas of life.

Failure is a good thing? What?! Let's jump right into these lessons and learn why!

Lesson 1: Your twenties are a great time in life to make mistakes and learn what you really want.

Most of us have probably failed at least one test in our lives. It feels pretty awful, right? But what we don't realize is that failing probably taught us something important, like what area we needed to study harder in.

When best-selling journalist and author Dolly Alderton was rejected by the college she wanted to attend, she was shocked. She had lived a pretty coddled life up until that point, and she wasn't used to rejection. Now, she's grateful for the wake-up call from her entitlement in her early twenties. It helped prepare her for the harsh realities of adult life.

In fact, your twenties are a *great* time to experience failure and learn from it. **It's a time to prepare for adult life and realize who you are and what you want to do with your life.** How else are you going to learn without stumbling a few times first? Your twenties are the time to transition between adolescence and adulthood, and there is no rush.

Day often reflects on how she was so serious about starting her career and landing her husband right after college. She now realizes she didn't need to be in such a rush. She should've spent less time making everything in life be perfect and more time finding out what she really wanted. So if you're in your twenties and you feel like you're failing, relax!

Lesson 2: You learn a lot about yourself when you fail at love.

After a few long-term relationships in her twenties, Day settled down and got married. But, unfortunately, the relationships she had were pretty old-fashioned, and she was quickly the cook, cleaner, and shopper, all while holding a full-time job.

She would tell herself that she was a strong woman for doing all of the chores, but she was actually putting the men in her life before her well-being. In short, she was failing in her relationships. With this came a drop in her self-worth and, eventually, a divorce.

While anyone can tell you divorce is absolutely not something you want to endure, Day acknowledges how important this experience was for her. **It not only helped her find her voice but also realize what she needed in life.**

After reflecting on her previous relationships, she realized she was stuck in a cycle of trying to complete herself with other people. Soon, she was actually able to have gratitude for each relationship and what it taught her. This helped her jump back into the dating pool and be prepared for a healthy relationship.

While dating again, failed relationships and dates helped her see that she still needed to learn how to stop pleasing others and start listening to her own desires.

Failed relationships can often make you want to close up and keep yourself from getting close to someone again. But one of the most important things Day learned it's important to stay open even when you've just had a painful heartbreak.

Lesson 3: Just because you're successful, it doesn't mean you are immune to failure.

Many people think that success and failure are opposites, but this isn't necessarily the truth. You can be a successful person and also be unhappy. I know, cue eye-rolling. It seems impossible that someone with millions of fans or millions of dollars could really not be satisfied with their life. They must be pretty ungrateful, right?

It's cliché, but money *really doesn't buy happiness*. We put far too much value into material things when they are really just stuff. Day found this to be true in her research over the years. **She met many people who experienced newfound money or fame, and it didn't necessarily mean they were happy.**

In conversations with actors Robert Pattinson, Simon Pegg, and Nicole Kidman, she learned that being famous came at the cost of their personal well-being. For example, Pattinson struggled with feelings of isolation and an utter lack of personal control in his life.

Pegg said he was much happier when he was a minor celebrity on a British TV show. After starring in hit movies, he found himself lost in Hollywood. It took recentering his life around his family to center him again.

Nicole Kidman dealt with depression after she won an Oscar. The only way to find herself again was to reconnect with nature and give up acting for a while. She finally could reevaluate what was important in life, and soon she was happy and ready to start working again.

Remember, when you are looking at your failures in life, you are the only person who can say whether an experience is a success or a failure. In reality, most events can be both; it just depends on how you see them.

How To Fail Review

A lot of this was just the author's personal experiences with a "here's what I learned" attached to it, but I didn't mind too much. Books like How To Fail with stories on the topic definitely have an important place in helping us grow because they explain *why* we should do certain things, not just how. Stories help us connect and understand things more deeply, which is why I really liked this book.

Who would I recommend the How To Fail summary to?

The 24-year-old woman who is considering starting a family, the 48-year-old mom that's having a lot of struggles in life, and anyone who's going through a big failure who could use some encouragement.