

The value of failing in career development: a chaos theory perspective

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Abstract Failing is a neglected topic in career development theory and counselling practice. Most theories see failing as simply the opposite of success and something to be avoided. It is contended that the Chaos Theory of Careers with its emphasis on complexity, uncertainty and consequent human imitations, provides a conceptually coherent account of failure in career development. The benefits of failing are outlined. The counselling implications of failure and ways for it to be addressed and utilised with those confronting career development challenges are also discussed.

Résumé. La valeur de l'échec dans le développement vocationnel : une perspective de la théorie du chaos. L'échec est un sujet négligé dans les théories du développement vocationnel ainsi que dans la pratique du conseil. La plupart des théories voient l'échec simplement comme l'opposé du succès et comme quelque chose à éviter. Il est soutenu que la « théorie du chaos des carrières », avec son insistance sur la complexité, l'incertitude et, par conséquent, les limites humaines, fournit un cadre conceptuel cohérent de l'échec dans le domaine du développement vocationnel. Les bénéfices de l'échec sont décrits. Les implications de l'échec pour le conseil ainsi que les moyens de l'aborder et de l'utiliser avec une population confrontée à des défis liés à son développement vocationnel seront également discutés.

Zusammenfassung. Der Wert des Scheiterns in der beruflichen Entwicklung: Eine Chaos-Theorie-Perspektive. Scheitern ist ein vernachlässigtes Thema in der Theorie der beruflichen Entwicklung und Beratungspraxis. Die meisten Theorien sehen Scheitern einfach als das Gegenteil von Erfolg und als etwas, das es zu vermeiden gilt. Es wird behauptet, dass die Chaos-Theorie der Laufbahnentwicklung

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mit ihrer Betonung der Komplexität, Unsicherheit und den daraus resultierenden menschlichen Grenzen, eine konzeptionell kohärente Darstellung des Scheiterns in der beruflichen Entwicklung bietet. Die Vorteile des Scheiterns werden skizziert. Die Implikationen des Scheiterns für die Beratung sowie Möglichkeiten, wie sie bei jenen, welche mit Herausforderungen in der Laufbahnentwicklung konfrontiert sind, angegangen und genutzt werden können, werden ebenfalls diskutiert.

Resumen. El Valor del Fracaso en el Desarrollo de la Carrera: La perspectiva de la teoría del caos. El fracaso es un tema desatendido en la teoría y práctica de la orientación para la carrera. La mayoría de las teorías consideran el fracaso como algo opuesto al éxito y que por tanto debe ser evitado. Se afirma que la Teoría del Caos, con su énfasis en la complejidad, incertidumbre y en consecuencia en las limitaciones humanas, proporciona una explicación conceptualmente coherente sobre el fracaso en el desarrollo de la carrera. Se delimitan los beneficios del fracaso, y se analizan sus implicaciones para la orientación, así como las formas en las que se puede abordar y utilizar, teniendo en cuenta los retos a los que se enfrenta el desarrollo de la carrera.

Keywords Failing · Chaos theory · Counselling

Most of the time, the majority of people want to be successful. Some crave success and work toward it. Often individuals want others to think of them as successful and want to think of themselves as having success. Our media celebrates the famously successful. In sport what is wanted is a winning team. In business those who have become powerful and rich are often revered. In academia, at conferences participants flock to hear the ideas of those whom a profession acknowledges as being successful in contributing to a particular field of human endeavour. The obverse to this desire for success is also likely to be the fear of failure. Even if everyone cannot be monumentally successful at the very least, most people, most of the time, are likely to think that failure should be avoided. Failure is often associated with feeling disgraced, diminished, disillusioned, discouraged, debilitated and de-motivated (Buzan, 2005). For many self-esteem plummets, initiative evaporates, confidence wavers and vision falters. It is tempting to think that others may see such persons as useless, inadequate, irresponsible, unrealistic and hopeless. Indeed the experience of failure may make people cynical, tentative, reactive, defensive, pessimistic, risk averse, angry and depressed.

In the career development literature readers will struggle to find much attention devoted to failure. As elsewhere it is success on which career development professionals focus. Derr (1986) defined career success in terms of achieving goals such as getting ahead, getting secure, getting high, getting free and getting balanced. A quick scan of the index of the “Encyclopedia of Career Development” (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006) reveals 21 references to “career success” or its equivalent but none to “failure”, “errors” or “mistakes”. Further there is a plethora of publications in the professional and self-help literature which promise inter alia, career success,

the job you always wanted, the alignment of work and purpose, getting the work you love, loving the work you do and finding fulfilment through work. It appears that no client and no careers counsellor, wants to know about failure.

The problem with this is that failure is very much apart of our world. Over 99% of all species which have existed on earth are extinct (Kauffman, 1995). Very few of our economic predictions are ever accurate (Taleb, 2007). “It is failure rather success which is the distinguishing feature of corporate life ... Most firms fail” (Ormerod, 2005, pp. 12, 15). Indeed one of the major reasons why adults seek career counselling is because they feel that their own efforts at career development have failed in some measure and that they therefore need assistance.

While the reasons for particular failures may be specific to a unique set of circumstances, when investigators have sought to induce more general insights into the nature of failure, one conclusion frequently is reached (Ormerod, 2005; Heath, 2009; Young, 2002). Complexity is to blame. Thus Ormerod (2005) concludes,

It is the sheer complexity associated with many decisions that defies the orderly application of rational calculations.... (p. 124).

and

Humans, whether acting as individuals or in a collective fashion in a firm or government, face massive inherent uncertainty about the effect of their actions ... (our) ability to understand such (complex) environments is inherently limited This is why things fail (p. 221).

At this point it can be asked, can any theory of career development incorporate complexity and its inherent failure and also provide insights into how failure might be able to be understood and utilised in career counselling? For most conceptualisations of career development failure, if it is given much attention at all, is most often considered simply as the opposite of success. So for matching theories like Holland (1997) failure is a misfit of the person and the occupation; for developmental theories like Super (1980) failure is equated with career immaturity; for constructivist theories like Savickas (1995, 2005) failure is a felt inability to move; for action theories (Krumboltz, 2009) failure is an unwillingness to act. This paper contends that only an approach which incorporates chaos theory to career development careers with its emphasis on complexity and its consequent inherent unpredictability, can provide a coherent theoretical framework for appropriately incorporating failure and providing not only some solutions to failure perceived as a problem but also to reconceptualise failure as a more positive career development outcome.

Pryor and Bright's Chaos Theory of Careers

Several writers have sought to apply chaos theory to career development including inter alia, Brack, Brack, and Zucker (1995), Riverin-Simard (1996), Gluck (1997), Gibb (1998), Amherdt (1999), Duffy (2000) and Bloch (2005). However, to date the Chaos Theory of Careers represents the most systematic, sustained, broadly

researched and evaluated application of chaos theory to career development (e.g. Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003a, b, 2004, 2007, 2011). The Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) understands reality in terms of complex dynamical systems. It characterises reality as multi-dimensional. It is multi-causal, and multi-influenced. Thus reality is complex and we should expect to fail quite regularly when navigating such complexity. Reality is characterised as a dynamical system because it is continually changing. According to the CTC, sometimes this change can be non-linear, meaning that causes can have disproportional effects (Strogatz, 2003). This adds another layer of complexity to the world in which we act, and also exponentially increases the likelihood that we will fail to be able to foresee or predict the consequences of many or actions and choices. Hence failure is an inherent consequence of the complexity of reality.

In terms of the CTC the world is also construed as systemic. Therefore everything is linked ultimately to everything else (Barabasi, 2003). This means that everything has the potential to influence and be influenced by everything else in the system. This further adds to the complexity of reality, because it means that reality contains an impossibly large number of contingencies and inter-relationships that are subject to continuous and potentially non-linear change. The combinatorial explosion of different possible states of the system can be appreciated by considering the popular Rubik's cube puzzle, where each face of the cube is differently coloured and made up of nine smaller cubes, each of which can be rotated. There are approximately forty-three quintillion different arrangements of this cube! Consequently the inter-connected nature of reality precludes us from systematically calculating all the possible outcomes in advance, and therefore profoundly circumscribes our ability to plan, predict and control. The result is that failure must be considered an inevitable consequence of this complexity.

Although complex dynamical systems have so many possible states they are in effect only predictable in a very limited sense and for a limited time horizon, they also demonstrate aperiodicity—the tendency to follow a self-similar pattern over time, albeit a pattern that does not exactly repeat. Therefore out of all of this complexity emerges a self-similar pattern of functioning called “dynamic stability”.

These systems are bounded and therefore limited, but these boundaries are permeable. Consider our own bodies as systems that are complex, every changing and limited. We have a very clear sense of the physical limits of our bodies, however they are sufficiently open to make them vulnerable to infection. Complex dynamical systems are therefore comprised of pattern and order, but also uncertainty, surprise, and the potential for disorder.

Reality is therefore construed as inherently uncertain, and this uncertainty exposes our limitations in terms of knowledge and personal control. It is not possible, in principle, to know everything about a potential situation because it is too complex and too changeable. Although humans might strive to understand all of the most plausibly relevant factors in a situation, the phenomenon of non-linearity means that amongst the seemingly trivial and unexplored factors may lurk one that could create disproportionate and unanticipated change (Taleb, 2007). This means that failure should be a perpetual consideration even in the best planned and strictly controlled circumstances. Efforts at reducing its likelihood are useful but they are

not necessarily always going to be enough to ensure that failure does not occur. As well individuals also need to accept positively the possibility of failure and to look at ways to derive benefit from its consequences and seek to devise further ways to utilise it and progress beyond the failed circumstances in which they become enmeshed.

Benefits of failure

Given the inevitability of failure within a complex dynamical system, it is comforting to acknowledge that failure brings with it many gifts. Four major benefits of failing are outlined which can help individuals in the career counselling context to negotiate the uncertainties inherent in a complex, interconnected and changing world of work.

An opportunity to learn

The most oft-quoted benefit of failure is learning. For instance Senge (1990) wrote “failure is an opportunity for learning—about inaccurate pictures of current reality” (p. 154). Senge cites the founder and CEO of the Polaroid film instant photography company who had a plaque on his office wall that reads “A mistake is an event, the full benefit of which has not yet been turned to your advantage” (p. 154).

Failure can help both counsellors and their clients to appreciate and accept the contingency of our lives and circumstances. According to the CTC, mistakes are inevitable and therefore should not be internalised as indications of lowered self-worth or inability, so much as simply part of the way the world works (Rescher, 1995). Often we undervalue the benefits of knowing what does not work. This is one of the reasons why it is hard to get research published which confirms the null hypothesis. However, knowing what we cannot do is the first step to understanding our limitations, accepting them without being imprisoned by them.

Encouraging creativity

The upside of uncertainty in a complexly changing world of work is the opportunity it affords for creative responses to the challenges of career development. However, creativity techniques such as brainstorming work on the basis of generating ideas without evaluating, that is, by tolerating the possibility and even the likelihood of failure. However, as Ariely (2008) notes the way to have good ideas is to have lots of ideas. That is because most ideas do not work, that is, they fail. However, the process of generating ideas without being constrained by the sense of failure can be fundamental to discovering the new idea which will work.

Builds strategy

When individuals can allow themselves the possibility of failure they are enabled to explore possibilities that they might otherwise immediately dismiss as impossible,

impractical or implacable. Accepting the value of failure may allow a deeper reality test to be undertaken in which our understanding of ourselves, others and our world may develop, in which individuals can gain confidence in negotiating the unknown or uncertain and to face fears about the consequences of acting in such circumstances. In this sense recognising failure rather fleeing from it, can be a major step to moving both counsellors and clients out of their respective “comfort zones”.

Personal/spiritual development

Experiencing failure can have the advantage of helping people to understand more about themselves and their world. It can assist in demarcating what individuals can change and what they cannot change. One of the frustrations to which individuals often subject themselves is anxiety over things over which they have no control which may cause their best laid plans to founder. A person may be applying to a specific tertiary teaching institution that they have their heart set on and fail the entry standard despite having achieved close to their potential due to unusually high demand for that particular course and/or that particular institution at that particular time. Similarly the applicant who believes that they have found the “perfect job” for them only to see the position go to another, can come to understand that while they might have been able and motivated to do the work that there might have been several others who were similarly attractive and had an advantage that this applicant did not have. From such experiences we can learn that we do not control everything and that life will not always be fair. If failure is appreciated, such experiences may teach lessons of humility in terms of claims about control and challenge us to greater resilience and adaptability.

The CTC’s implications of failure for career counselling

Through the Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) career counsellors and their clients can gain new perspectives on both the prospect and the experience of failure. The following are some of the ways in which this can be achieved.

Normalising failure

Chen (2005) suggested that career counsellors would be advised to normalise the reality of chance in career development through counselling. A necessary corollary of this is that careers counsellors must also normalise failure since implicit in the concept of chance, is uncertainty and therefore the possibility of failure. Therefore failure should not be the outcome “that dares not speak its name” in counselling. Rather, it should be accepted and discussed as a reasonable and possible outcome in an uncertain and complicated world. In fact, to omit to do so is actually to do clients a major disservice akin to that identified by Krumboltz (1998).

According to the CTC, normalising failure involves assisting clients to recognize that failure is simply an inevitable part of human life and experience. It is usually

less desirable than success but there is nothing particularly bad or shameful about it. Failure typically means that the person tried something new. They were willing to take a risk. This time it did not work but that is not the end of the world: people fail all the time (Ormerod, 2005).

Often progress is characterized as “two steps forward and one back”. This adage recognizes that success is not necessarily either linear or continuous. Some clients can become discouraged by the “one step back” which identifies failure. The value of the progress formulation is that it identifies failure as integral to success. Moreover, the fact that clients fail in this process is evidence that they are meeting genuine challenges, extending themselves and developing new capacities and insights. If someone’s career development progress is just “three steps forward and none back”, it suggests the possibility that such clients may be only facing tasks that are easy, perhaps too easy for them to grow and develop as career decision makers and even as individuals. In facing setbacks which are sometimes interpreted as failures it may be a useful counselling strategy to have clients “schedule comebacks” along the journey of career development as a way to acknowledge and normalise the reality of failure.

Addressing the fear of failure

It may be that failure is neglected frequently in the literature on career development counselling because both clients and their counsellors are afraid of it. Career counsellors may be afraid of failure because they may fear disappointing clients’ expectations that they should help them and even provide the solutions to their problems. If so, such counsellors need to address such clients’ expectations in terms of counsellors’ limitations in an uncertain world (Pryor & Bright, 2011).

Clients’ fear of failure needs to be addressed through an investigation of why failure seems so bad for them. Are such concerns legitimate fears? What is the worst outcome that could occur through the failure of a particular decision or action? How might clients prepare for and cope with such contingencies? How might consideration of such outcomes assist in redressing weaknesses in the proposed course of action in comparison with other alternatives? What contingency plans can be formulated to reduce the possibilities of failures?

In some ways this is simply the obverse of so-called “magic questioning” in career counselling. Magic questioning typically invites clients to contemplate their career future without any limitations of power, money, knowledge, capacities or opportunities. “Failure questioning” could be understood in terms of what if everything you planned to do in your career over a specified time in the future, was a failure. What would that look like? How would you react? What would you do? Janis and Mann (1977) suggested a similar strategy as a contingency plan strategy.

Accepting out limitations

The Chaos Theory of Careers draws attention not only to human potentials but also to human limitations. In a complex, changing, connected world, no-one can ever know everything or control all outcomes. Life is contingent and so all our plans and

efforts are subject to uncertainty. In fact, from a systems theory perspective such as CTC, limitations are essential for order and stability. Without limitations systems would not be bounded and reality would be total chaos. Our limitations in this sense, define us to at least the same extent as our capabilities. Therefore, they should be explored, mapped, understood and accepted. Some aspects of our lives simply cannot be changed. We cannot regrow a severed leg. We cannot guarantee winning a lottery or successfully obtaining highly competitive entry into a desired course or organization. However, rather than “awfulising” (Ellis, 1969) such limitations, counselling clients need to learn to utilize them and to work around them. Such strategies to do this include: Doing what you can do and avoiding what you cannot do; Developing partnerships and teams to redress individuals’ limitations; Relinquishing unrealistic aspirations; Using strengths to compensate for weaknesses (Edelman, 2002).

Tolerating the imperfect

All clients need to accept that an uncertain world inevitably means that in human terms it will also be an imperfect world. Since all of us are limited then most of our efforts are subject to failure sooner or later. However, this realization does not render meaningless all such efforts. A person working for the International Red Cross or the United Nations can readily acknowledge that world starvation or world peace, may never be achievable—but that does not mean that efforts to achieve such goals are not noble and in limited ways may be efficacious. No-one can help everyone but individuals can positively impact some other people. The desire for perfection is a recipe for frustration or an excuse for failure to act at all. Perfect jobs, perfect organisations perfect teachers and perfect supervisors do not exist. Tolerating the imperfect is not accepting an unsatisfying compromise so much as an empathic response to human limitations (including our own) and a contingent reality.

Vocational counsellors in the rehabilitation context frequently encounter clients who have confronted the unpredictability of the world in the experience of serious accident or trauma and in the process have had their expectations and confidence shattered. Some of these clients then become imprisoned in self-limitation (Pryor & Bright, 2007). Such experiences can make people intimidated by change and unwilling to think or act constructively for fear of further injury. Every new situation and challenge may appear too great and too difficult. Such individuals may not only accept their limitations, they either consciously or unconsciously, exaggerate them. For them, all new action is doomed to failure. These clients require counselling support to come to terms with the fact that uncertainty and limitation do not entail the futility of strategy or undermine the power of taking initiative. In CTC terms complex dynamical systems are both unstable and stable, predictable and unpredictable, routine and surprising. Counselling strategies such as breaking tasks down, exercising limited initiative, developing self efficacy and focusing on what they can influence are some of the ways counsellors can assist such clients to being able to overcome self-limiting thinking and behaviour.

Valuing failure

Clients need to be encouraged to value failure rather than fear and eschew it. Failure often results from having tried something very ambitious or extremely difficult. The effort itself may be praiseworthy. Such individuals may have sought to challenge themselves in the hope that they might do something extraordinary. Many constrained by fear of failure, never even undertake such endeavours. The fact that those who did were unsuccessful does not render the experience less noteworthy. It demonstrates that they were prepared to push themselves beyond their known limits in an effort to understand what those limits actually are. Moreover, it is possible to construe such failure as a form of success. Thus weightlifters only know their own capabilities at the point at which they cannot lift anything heavier. Or in athletics to record a “personal best” may not mean that the person wins the race but it does mean that he or she has still accomplished something worthwhile.

Further, failure teaches us what does not work. We often undervalue the usefulness of such information. Irish author Jonathon Swift is reported to have observed that having made a mistake is not lamentable but rather it means that we are wiser today than we were yesterday. Pharmaceutical companies spend millions of dollars each year on developing drugs over 90% of which will never become marketable. Failure helps people to learn persistence. In our own experience as writers, we have learnt more from the critics of our work than from our supporters. Reviewers expose our failures to think logically and communicate intelligibly. Every rejected journal manuscript is a valuable learning experience for us.

Continuously monitoring, evaluating and planning

Bright and Pryor (2008) highlighted the career counselling need to shift intervention perspectives from just formulating plans to plans and planning. In a changing world yesterday's plans may be addressing situations which no longer obtain. In a globalised world in which change is non-linear, subtle changes in the economics or politics of complex dynamical systems may result in implications for individuals' working lives in places far distant from such changes. The recent “global financial crisis” is an obvious case in point. However, often such changes can be more localised such as a publicised decline in the profitability of an employing manufacturing company in a country town. It is a common occurrence for individuals working in such organizations to deny or otherwise avoid considering the possibility of personal redundancy in such circumstances until it actually happens. Regrettably often it is only then distraught personally and financially, that they seek career development support.

However, in a complexly changing world, the CTC suggests that individuals need to learn to be watchful rather than assume that the way their world is operating at the moment will continue to be the case indefinitely into the future. In this sense the mantra of goal setting as the key to career success does need to be questioned. In the short-term goals can be very helpful in motivating, organising and achieving desired ends. However, it is questionable as Shapiro (2006) has observed that goals formulated for longer timeframes that flow into years, are as efficacious. One of the

biggest problems is simply that goal formulated and committed to at one time in one set of circumstances, may simply not be that desirable as the timeframe between its formulation and time of fulfilment increases because the longer such a time interval is, the higher the probability that change will intervene in terms of the person changing, the means of achievement changing, the context in which the person is operating changing and the nature of the goal itself changing over time. It is therefore advisable for individuals to be regularly and continuously be monitoring and evaluating what it is they are seeking to achieve and if necessary to reformulate their goals in light of change and new knowledge.

Contingency planning

If failure, despite our best efforts and most efficient planning, is always a possibility, then it simply makes sense to work out some alternative strategies if outcomes do not emerge in the ways we want or expect. This is not an admission of failure or even an asseveration of a lack of confidence in one's current career development strategy. It is simply an acknowledgement of the way the world works. The cliché is "failing to plan is planning to fail" and in the sense of not recognising the possibility of failure it is true that denying the possibility of failure or simply neglecting to take into account, constitutes a poor way to negotiate the challenges of career decision making. For example, Bright and Pryor (2009) developed card sort technique which seeks to draw attention to the need to plan for contingency by getting clients to look at career development challenges and to ask questions about the probabilities, possibilities and plans associated with each.

Redeeming failure

Scott (1994) has outlined a way for individuals to redeem the experience of failure. Her approach can be summarised as the following five steps:

- (1) Recognise the problem, failure or disaster: avoid denying that there is a problem;
- (2) Separate yourself from the experience: do not internalise the problem and brand yourself as a failure as a result;
- (3) Take the positives out of the experience: look for the things that went right and for what lessons can be learnt for the future;
- (4) Determine your next step: continue to act and avoid getting mired in inactivity;
- (5) Pat yourself on the back: recognise that failure did not kill you, that you are still able to act and that next time you may be able to do better, that is, you survived and that itself is a positive worth being congratulated for.

Examining personal risk tolerance

Considering the possibilities of failure may assist career counselling clients to evaluate how risk tolerant they really are. That is, how they construe the cost/benefit balance of particular decisions and actions with varying levels of outcome

uncertainties. Pryor, Amundson, and Bright (2008) have set out such issues for counsellors in terms of probabilities and possibilities. Understanding clients' individual levels of risk tolerance can be helpful in career counselling especially if that risk tolerance is an obstruction to pursuing a desired career option. Counsellors may then be able to utilize techniques to increase clients risk tolerance by inoculation techniques, cognitive behavioural strategies or desensitization processes such as taking "small steps" toward higher risk career possibilities.

Developing opportunity awareness: luck readiness

Through the work of Neault (2002) and Krumboltz and Levin (2004), Pryor and Bright (2005a) identified eight dimensions of "luck readiness" which is defined "... as recognising, creating, utilising and adapting to opportunities and outcomes occasioned by chance" (p. 2). Luck readiness can be understood as a way to negotiate both the positive and the negative unplanned outcomes in our lives. In this sense failure is included as part of the downside of luck readiness. The eight dimensions are: Flexibility, Optimism, Risk, Curiosity, Persistence, Strategy, Efficacy and Luckiness. The Luck Readiness Index (Pryor & Bright, 2005b) assesses these dimensions and Pryor and Bright (2006) outlines a series of strategies that career counsellors can employ to assist their client redress any obvious weaknesses in the dimensions as revealed by individuals' LRI scale scores.

Conclusion

Failure in career development has had a very bad press for a very long time. It has been neglected in the relevant literature, eschewed by career decision makers and shunned by counsellors as an outcome in counselling. Yet even a little reflection will acknowledge as noted by Rescher (1995). The almost endemic nature of failure in our world and in human aspirations and endeavours. Moreover the complexity, change and interconnectedness of our world of work in this century almost inevitably mean that failure is likely to increase in our counselling clients' experience now and into the future. This fact therefore, should be accepted on the one hand and sought to be used as constructively as possible on the other.

In this paper it has been argued that the Chaos Theory of Careers provides the most coherent conceptual account of failure in career development since it places fundamental emphasis on the limitations of human knowledge and control and on the contingent nature of all human experience. In a sense failure is a perpetual concomitant of uncertainty arising from the complex dynamical nature of systems. Therefore it does not necessarily represent some kind of personal weakness of character and often its consequences are not to be feared since they may teach us a lot about ourselves and how to adapt to the uncertain nature of human existence and in particular, to career development.

Often, individuals do not know all that they may be capable of achieving because the fear of failure constrains their efforts and they settle for comfortable mediocrity rather than outstanding achievement, the reasonable instead of the great and what

they know they can do rather than what might be able to be accomplished. While it is not irrational recklessness that is being advocated, sometimes it is important to assist individuals to extend their horizons beyond their self-imposed limitations in order to establish what ultimately those limitations might actually be which in turn, may also reveal potentials that at present may be scarcely imagined or credited. Recognising, confronting, risking, adapting to, persisting through and recovering from failures can be an integral part of this process of both self and career development. Therefore, failure deserves more credit and attention than it usually receives by career development theorists and researchers, career counsellors and career decision makers.

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