

## First Year Seminar

### “Why I Lied About My Freshman Year”

### “How to Have a Really Successful Failure”

Part of the goal of this seminar is to help you equip yourself to be a resilient student, a critical part of your current vocation. Being resilient doesn't mean you don't experience difficulties or failures. Quite the contrary, resiliency is about bouncing back from adversity.

- 1) Think of a time you failed successfully or unsuccessfully. You need not dwell on the failure itself unless you feel so inclined. What did you do to deal with this failure? Would you do anything different or the same today if you faced the same adversity? Explain.

When I struggled in running Cross Country, I became frustrated and didn't use the failure to motivate myself to work and train more diligently. For the first two years of high school, I excelled in cross country, I was told I showed promise of running fast, and I hoped that I would always improve my time. However, I hit a wall my junior year, and for some reason the training and the workouts did not show in my slow times. I gave up when people started complaining that I wasn't trying my hardest. People reasoned that since younger athletes were running faster than me, I was slacking off. What they said shouldn't have affected me, but my frustration with myself paired with their discouragement caused me to lose the mental game of running. Ever afterwards, I didn't care, and I never tried running hard at all, causing their original lies to become true. Instead of embracing the lack of improvement as a time for changing my approach to training, I allowed the obstacle and the voices of discouragement to discourage me from working as hard as possible. If I were to repeat that year, I would have ignored my teammates criticism unless I could use it to motivate myself to work harder. Instead of using failure as discouragement, I should have used it as an incentive to work harder.

- 2) Interview someone you trust- a parent, mentor, teacher, etc. Ask them about a failure or significant adversity they faced and how they dealt with it, learned from it. Explain how their “story” resonates (or not) with the article on a successful failure. Be specific in reference to the article.

I interviewed my brother, who failed a religion class at Calvin college and learned that understanding professor's teaching methods is the key to success. He apparently didn't know when the due date was for a paper in the class, since he never used the Calvin email system. Instead, he tried to use his personal email for contact with the professor for asking questions, but the professor never responded. As a result, he received a zero for the assignment and failed the class. When he retook the class, his new professor was willing to accommodate for my brother's personal email preferences, and my brother passed. According to the article, it is recommended in step three of successfully failing to admit the truth, and my brother succeeded in recognizing his error for not paying attention and not using the Calvin email system. However, he did not follow any of the other tips laid out in the article, since he did not feel remorse as stated on step one and he did not fail again in step five.