

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 127: HOW TO HANDLE FAILURE

As I hope you've learned through the recent weeks of the [#BizConfidenceChallenge](#): *Being confident isn't about being perfect*. It isn't about believing you can do anything (that's just arrogance). *Confidence is about believing that you can handle anything*. That you will survive anything. That you will be ok. Even if you do the scary thing. Even if there's a scary outcome. You gain confidence by DOING things. By trying, succeeding and failing.

If I want to be a more confident teacher, I need to teach more.

If you want to be a more confident seller, sell more.

Experiment, try stuff, fail at some stuff and then use that as data to try new stuff. From that experience and learning and data CAN flow confidence.

But, it doesn't always.

After you have the experience and you survive it (even if you were awful!) a Confidence Fairy doesn't come down and grant it - you have to grant it to yourself. You have to give yourself permission to say: *Ok! I did that, I can do this next thing! I survived that, I can survive anything!*

Today we're going to talk about granting yourself the permission to feel confident, even after failures. We're going to discuss why failure is vital to the success of your business, and how you can use it to grow your confidence, instead of crushing it.

As we talked about last week, one way to build this confidence is to look at everything you've accomplished - your successes. But an equally important way to build confidence is to look at what you've survived - **your failures**.

That's what this week's challenge was about: reminding yourself of all you've ALREADY done and survived.

You see, this is the part of confidence that's entirely up to you: you can decide to believe that you will survive, despite your fears... or you can decide that you'll fail and explode and that leads to not even trying.

There's a passage in [The Confidence Code](#) that perfectly sums it up:

"Confidence, at least the part that's not in our genes, requires hard work, substantial risk, determined persistence, and sometimes bitter failure. Building it demands regular exposure to all of these things. You don't get to experience how far you can go in life - at work and everywhere else - without pushing yourself, and, equally important, without being pushed along by others. Gaining confidence means getting outside your comfort zone, experiencing setbacks, and, with determination, picking yourself up again" (page 123).

You can't build confidence without failure. If you only build confidence based on your success, on things that go right, you run the risk of building contingent self-worth or a fixed mindset. We talked more about contingent self-worth in [last week's episode](#) and more about fixed mindset in [episode 49](#), but the short version is that if you get too attached to your successes, if you build your self-worth and confidence on being successful, you will try to protect yourself from losing that sense of self-worth. To protect yourself, you'll avoid doing anything that might cause failure, so you'll try less stuff. And whenever you try to avoid failure, you will avoid doing the things that move your business forward.

"Success represents the 1% of your work which results from the 99% that is called failure." - Soichiro Honda

First, let's define what I mean by failure. What we're talking about is anything that doesn't get the result you hoped for. If you had a launch and sold fewer than you wanted. If you posted a picture to Instagram and got no likes. If you did a craft show and sold fewer items than you wanted.

As I define this failure, can you see how it comes back to expectations? What you consider a failure, someone else, someone with a smaller or newer business, or with different goals, may consider a total success.

So that's the first thing to keep in mind: **Failure isn't objective.** It's entirely subjective - it's in the eye of the beholder.

With that in mind, you DO need to try some things that are out of your comfort zone, things you may not succeed at. So you need to open yourself up to failure. And I would argue that IF you want your business to grow, you need to actually HAVE some failures. If you're not failing, you're not trying big enough experiments, you aren't pushing yourself towards the next thing.

But failing a lot isn't going to automatically imbue you with the confidence to keep going! You have to learn the right lesson from failure.

There are two lessons you can take after any failure:

I suck!

or

I survived!

The choice of which lesson you're going to learn is entirely in your hands.

No one is going to come along and tell which lesson to take. You have to decide, over and over, to look at your failures and say: I survived! On to the next thing!

The tricky thing is that we're making this decision all the time, often unconsciously. You are always experiencing tiny failures (failure = not the result you were hoping for) and you are assigning it a value: Proof I suck! Proof I can survive!

Let's have an example!

My first craft show, I decided to do a show with a good friend's mom, who sold honey and candles. It was a teeny tiny show, about three hours away in Charlotte. Neither I nor Sally had ever done a show before and this particular show had never been held before.

I spent 8 hours at the show (not to mention driving time, setting up time, etc.) and sold 2 skeins of yarn - and that was to other vendors, not shoppers.

The first question is: Success or failure? Did it meet my expectations? Or not?

For some people, even selling 1 skein at the show would have been a success! Let's say that for me, it wasn't. I wanted to at least make back my food and gas and booth fee - that was how I defined success.

So the show was a failure, for me.

CONFIDENCE IS BUILT IN THE MOMENT AFTER I TRY SOMETHING HARD, DESPITE THE FEAR AND FAILURE.

If, in the moments following my craft show, I decide that now everyone hates me because and I should stop selling yarn, I've strengthened the fear. I've made it much less likely that I'll do another show.

But, if in the moments following my craft show I decide that it went well... If I decide to focus on the skeins I sold, or on what I learned from this first show, I've strengthened by confidence. I've made it much more likely that I'll share my work again, with confidence.

But the choice is entirely up to me and what I choose to learn from this encounter.

THIS LESSON WILL INFORM THE NEXT ACTION I TAKE IN MY BUSINESS.

Because, remember, we're not in this just for the warm fuzzy feelings of confidence - our businesses NEED us to have the confidence to effectively market them. Our businesses need us to have the confidence to take action. Our businesses need us to do the scary thing, whether it's applying to a craft show, talking to a stranger about our work, sharing it on social media, or asking for the sale.

So you have a choice: Choose to strengthen the fear that holds you back, or choose to strengthen the confidence that moves you forward.

I hope you'll choose to strengthen the confidence.

If you're taking the biz confidence challenge and haven't completed this week's challenge, here's your reminder:

1. Identify a small biz situation that you were afraid of and survived.
2. Share a picture on Instagram, telling us about it, tag it with #bizconfidencechallenge
3. Tune into the webinar tomorrow, where I'll talk about my own failures (of which there are many!) and I'll help you reframe your own failures!
- 4.

To join the challenge and get access to the live webinar, sign up at : <http://taraswiger.com/bizconfidence>.

And if you're enjoying the challenge, share it with your friends! Leave a comment and review on iTunes!