



15 Quotations on Failure

From The Kevin Eikenberry Group

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15 Quotations on Failure

I love quotations.

I've been collecting quotations since I was in college. I have thousands of 3x5 note cards, quotation books, quotation software, hundreds of quotations highlighted in the books in my library, and notes in my journals. I have them on my wall, on my bulletin board, and for many years I have been sharing these quotations (and more) through the publication of [Powerquotes](#) and [Powerquotes Plus](#) services.

What follows are some of my favorites from my collection on the very important topic of failure – and how to think about it and take advantage of it. Following each quotation, as is the custom in my [Powerquotes](#) service, are some Questions to Ponder.

You may choose to read these straight through, read one each day, or store this document for the day you are looking for the right quotation for a speech, some writing, or when you are thinking about or dealing with a perceived failure in your life. However you choose to use it, I hope that it provides you with thoughtful moments, and perhaps a new perspective on failure and its use in your life.

I wish you failures in support of great successes.

Yours in Learning,



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"Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly."

-- Robert Kennedy, U.S. Secretary of State

Question to Ponder

When have I dared to fail?

• • • •

"We must expect to fail...but fail in a learning posture, determined not to repeat the same mistakes, and to maximize the benefits from what is learned in the process."

-- Ted Engstrom, author

Question to Ponder

What have I learned from recent mistakes?

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"Half the failures of this world arise from pulling in one's horse as he is leaping."

-- Augustus Hare, writer

Question to Ponder

When have I pulled up during a jump?

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"Failure is always a safe, familiar, no-risk refuge, a known experience; it focuses no new of testing responsibilities upon one. Success, on the other hand, is unknown territory and a high-risk business; the very life-style it imposes is full of relentless demands for even better performances and achievements."

-- Alan Olmstead

Questions to Ponder

Am I willing to risk to succeed?

Do I have a clear picture of the benefits of the success I strive for?

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"I don't possess a lot of self-confidence. I'm an actor so I simply act confident every time I hit the stage. I am consumed with the fear of failing. Reaching deep down and finding confidence has made all my dreams come true."

-- Arsenio Hall, actor

Questions to Ponder

How do I find my confidence?

What role does confidence play in my life?



"Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavor."

-- Truman Capote, author

Questions to Ponder

Do I view failure in this way?

If not, how might this view of failure change my actions?

What failures have "flavorized" my later successes?



"I think success has no rules, but you can learn a lot from failure."

-- Jean Kerr, American author and playwright

Questions to Ponder

Do I routinely try to learn from my failures?

What did I learn?

What have I failed at lately?

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"Be of good cheer. Do not think of today's failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task, but you will succeed if you persevere; and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles."

-- Helen Keller, author and inspiration

Questions to Ponder

How can I maintain my optimism in the face of challenges?

What can I learn about perseverance from Helen Keller?

• • • •

"Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses."

-- George Washington Carver, chemist and educator

Questions to Ponder

How strong is my excuse habit?

Is this habit holding me back from reaching my goals?

• • • •

"I'd rather be a failure at something I love than a success at something I hate."

-- George Burns, entertainer

Questions to Ponder

Do I agree?

How likely is it that I would be a failure, in the long run, at something I love?

• • • •

"You must have long range goals to keep you from being frustrated by short range failure."

-- Charles Noble

Questions to Ponder

How can I keep those long range goals in sight even when short term failures occur?

What are my long range goals?

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"Redefine the word fail. There is no failure in life other than not trying. If you want something badly enough, make an attempt. If you want to paint, get a brush and do it. If you want to sing, sing. A lot of people get scared. They're afraid to fail. Take that word out of your vocabulary. You don't fail. You've tried your best."

-- Jane Seymour, actress

Questions to Ponder

How do I apply it to myself?

What is my definition of the word fail?

When did I last try my best?

• • • •

"Ever tried? Ever failed? No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better. "

-- Samuel Beckett - playwright and novelist

Questions to Ponder

What are my personal feelings about failure?

How willing am I to fail?

What do I typically do after I fail?



"Good people are good because they've come to wisdom through failure. We get very little wisdom from success, you know."

-- William Saroyan - novelist and playwright

Questions to Ponder

Other than through failure, how else have I gained wisdom?

What wisdom have I gained lately?



"Failure is instructive. The person who really thinks learns quite as much from his failures as from his successes."

-- John Dewey - philosopher and educator

Questions to Ponder

Do I take time to really think?

What can I learn from yesterday?

About The Kevin Eikenberry Group

The Kevin Eikenberry Group is a professional speaking, training and consulting team hand picked and trained by Kevin Eikenberry. We provide training design and delivery (both classroom and electronic), performance support development, performance coaching, and organizational development consulting. Whether we are leading a training workshop, speaking to a group, facilitating a planning meeting, consulting with a leadership team, helping with team building, writing, or developing products; our vision will be clear in everything we do.

The Kevin Eikenberry Group exists to provide organizations, teams and individuals with the tools they need to transform the potential they have into the results they want. We believe that extraordinary potential exists in each of us. With the right environment, resources, skills and knowledge, 'ordinary' people can produce extraordinary results. This belief drives our business, the products and services we offer and the way we want to work with our Clients.

They have worked with Fortune 500 companies, smaller firms, universities, government agencies and more. Their client list include: Amgen, Aramark, various Chevron companies, John Deere, Purdue University, Rolls Royce, the Red Cross, Southwest Airlines, the U.S. Marine Corp, the U.S. Mint, and Verizon.

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