



Episode 6: How To Fail Forward - Being Successful At Failing Part 2 of 2

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

failure, fail, episode, podcast, comfort zone, epic failure, agility, thoughts, indecision, feelings, sweet spot, succeed, training, work, decision, learn, avoid, showing, success, skill

This is the agility challenge podcast with Daisy peel, you're listening to Episode Six. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host, Daisy peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do list seems so long that you don't even know where to get started, then this podcast is for you. For more podcast episodes, training, content and coaching from me, head to [www dot the agility challenge.com](http://www.thetheagilitychallenge.com), where members get access to monthly training and handling challenges, in addition to lead play, and a whole lot more. Let's dive in with today's episode.

Hey there, everybody, and welcome to episode six of the agility challenge podcast. This is the second in a two part mini series on failure, how to fail how to fail more effectively and how to fail forward. Last time I talked about what failure is it's really and truly it's just simply the absence of having met desired or expected results. I talked about how we get to choose how we feel about failure. So the circumstances in that thought model that I keep referring to the objective circumstances would just be that we didn't meet expectations. And then we immediately have some thoughts that get triggered by that failure to meet expectations, and then some feelings about that failure. So if you didn't listen to episode five, which was the first in this two part miniseries, I really suggest that you go to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.daisypeel.com), forward slash five, and check that episode out, and then listen to this one. But



you can still listen to this one, and then go back to listening to Episode Five, that's fine, too. So I talked about how we can choose feelings that serve us, or that don't we get to choose whether or not we experience negative emotions about our thoughts about a failure, or positive emotions. And I don't necessarily mean that we need to be jumping for joy that we failed. But we can at least think of positive in terms of additive do these emotions serve us or add to our experience and our progress moving forward. We get to choose feelings that will motivate us to continue to try things that are just out of reach that are just out of our comfort zone. And then that in turn will expand our comfort zone or not. And at the end of Episode Five, I asked you guys to take some time to sit down and dump all of your thoughts about your most recent epic failure where you tried something that was out of your comfort zone and failed to just dump all those thoughts out in written form. And to take a look at those thoughts. And then also observe your feelings about that epic failure. And I wanted you guys to take some time to look at those thoughts and feelings from arm's length and analyze them. Are those feelings feelings that serve you or not? So if you did that, if you listened to to Episode Five, and then you did that thought dump, what did you discover? I'd really love to hear from you guys in a comment. I also talked last time about how we may not be confident when we're working towards something that we've never done before. Because we typically draw confidence from past events. And so we might not feel confident about something that we're working toward that we've never done before. And it might not even be appropriate to even try and feel confident about something that you've never done before. So the example that I used was teaching running contacts. But let's also say you've never been to Nationals before. You've never been to Nationals. You've never been in the finals at Nationals and you find yourself in the finals. How can you be confident about your results in that situation if you've never been in that situation before. However, even if you may not be confident when it comes to working towards something you've never done before, you can get confident confident about your familiarity with the process of trying and failing and succeeding and you can get confident with your familiarity



when it comes to how to process and deal with the failure itself. So that you can have installed beforehand, so that you know okay, I'm going into a situation I don't know whether or not I can do this because I've never actually done it before. But I do know how I can plan for success and how I'm going to celebrate success and I also know how I can plan for how to deal with failure. And I also know that failure is part of success. And that if I want to succeed, I'm going to have to fail maybe many more times than I succeed. And so I can get confident with my thoughts and feelings on that. So, in this part, part two of our little mini series in Episode Six, I want to talk about failure as something that you want to plan to include in your dog training and handling. It's something that you want to plan to include in your in competitive endeavors, really, in every aspect of life, failure is not something to avoid. Because if you start avoiding failure, because really, you want to avoid negative feelings that you have about failure, then you're going to end up anesthetizing yourself to those feelings of failure, but also to the opportunity for feelings that are associated with success. And then you just end up anesthetized in a state of confusion, lack of action, lack of progress, and just sort of tumbling around like you're in the spin cycle in a washing machine. So you want to plan to include failure in your dog training, and you're handling in your competitive endeavors. And not only do you want to include it, you want to pursue it, you're going to want to pursue and get really good at failure. Because if I'm confident in my ability to fail and to deal with and process failure, I'm going to be much more likely to try new things, I'm going to be much more likely to put myself out there. And I am going to be successful as I fail. And I'm going to keep trying, and I'm going to keep failing, and I'm going to keep succeeding as well, because that's the thing if you are avoiding failure, because you don't want to feel like a failure, or you don't want to feel the negative emotions associated with failure, you're also avoiding opportunity for growth, and you're avoiding opportunity for success. So if I'm confident that I can manage my thoughts and feelings about failure, and I'm confident in my ability to process failure as feedback, I'm just going to be a whole lot more likely to go for it, try new things, put myself out there, fail and succeed. And because I'm planning to fail, and



not only that, because I'm pursuing failure as part of this process, moving towards success, I'm going to think and feel differently about it. And I'm going to keep at it. And I'm going to keep getting better and better. So I really love this quote, I like finding motivational quotes online, because they're really pithy ways for me to help remember the role failure plays and success for myself. So this quote has been attributed to Thomas Edison, who knows if he actually said it, but it's a cool quote, anyways, I didn't fail 1000 times I did 1000 things that didn't work. And so that's a great way to view failures as learning failure should be viewed as learning opportunities. We didn't meet an expectation. So we need to evaluate why we didn't meet the expectation, and then take action, tweak action, and then try again. And we're just going to keep learning and succeeding and failing and learning and succeeding and failing. In the last episode, Episode Five, I use the example of falling down with a Toddler like the way a toddler does when they're learning to walk or a puppy when they're learning to walk. And we can actually do that. Now, as adults. If we learn to fall, we can get really good at falling. There are actually classes out there that you can take as an adult to learn how to fall, we can learn to stumble and roll and pop back up, we can learn how to avoid breaking a hip or breaking a wrist. It's a learned skill. And you learn by scraping your knees and trying again, in the literal sense as well as the metaphorical sense. You can learn to fail, you can get really good at failing, you can learn how to Metaphorically speaking, stumble, roll and pop back up and try again. Armed with additional knowledge that you just gained from that previous stumble. It's a learned skill, and external guidance and coaching is super helpful. If you have someone that can help remind you, this is how we fail. This is how we learn. This is how we manage our emotions and thoughts with regards to failure. You can learn a little more quickly, but you can absolutely practice and learn and get better at this all on your own. The whole point of this podcast is to help give you some guidance so that you can learn to get out of your comfort zone more readily get more comfortable with failure and continue stepping out of your comfort zone and looking for ways to step out of your comfort zone because you're no longer afraid of the negative emotions associated



with failure. You're running toward failure because you know that's how you're going to get better. So in this episode, I'm going to encourage you, I gave you some homework in the last episode, this episode, you get some homework as well, this time around your homework is to actually set some failure goals. So I'm going to ask you to aim to fail at least five times a month.

And I don't mean just like spilling some water. When you go to pour a glass of water, that's not an epic failure, that's well, within your comfort zone, you have plenty of confidence that you can pour a glass of water, because you've done it before, I mean, aim to fail at least five times a month in a situation where you had to reach a little bit with regards to your mental game, your mechanical skills when it comes to training your dog or handling your dog, or competitive skills, which is kind of your mental game, aim to fail at least five times a month in this with this type of failure. Because if it's less than that, then you kind of have to ask yourself, if you're really even putting yourself out there enough to grow at all in any direction. So five times a month, and I want it so this homework is going to take you a full month to do I want you to write the failures down and keep a record of them, you can put them on your calendar, you can make a sticky note, you can use a Notes app on your phone, if you've got a journal, you can write in your journal. But write those failures down and keep a record of those failures. When one of those failures happens, then, you know, you tried something that was out of your comfort zone. And you're one failure closer to your five failures a month goal. So what this is going to do internally for you is it's going to sort of flip the script on failure, you're going to be looking for failure, because you have a goal of five failures a month, at least five times in the next month, you're going to stretch yourself in a way where your reach is a little bit more than your grasp. Meaning if you reach a little bit, then you can actually move to a space beyond your current grasp in terms of skill or knowledge. So your reach is going to extend a little bit beyond your grasp. That's the sweet spot where you're a little uncomfortable, but it's not impossible. You're going to look for five ways to do that and to get outside of your comfort



zone and challenge yourself. And your failures are going to turn into badges of honor instead of events that you try to avoid. And in this regard, the only failure is if at the end of the month, you haven't failed five times. This is going to you're going to be surprised that this is going to change how you think and feel about failure because instead of making failure means something awful, and something negative and something where you really beat yourself up. And if you're a perfectionist, you beat yourself up even more, you're going to start to view failure as an accomplishment. It's one of your five planned failures for the month. And your feelings about that failure or those failures is going to change, you're going to experience anticipation and excitement, because you're looking forward to oh, here's one of my five hit that was one of my five failures, rather than anxiety, and avoidance and dejection and disappointment. Now, these have to be epic failures. Now, I don't mean failures that put you in the hospital, I just mean, they have to be the kinds of failures where you showed up, quote, unquote, showed up to do something to try something and didn't meet expectation, because you can also fail by simply not showing up. And I mean that in the literal and the metaphorical sense. So you can actually fail to show up. So you can set aside training time, or time to work out at the gym, and just simply not show up. That's you're just failing to show up, you didn't show up. You didn't go, you didn't put your gym pants on and go You didn't put your training pants on and go. Or you can show up but never have done any work to prepare. You didn't give it your all. So you decided that you were going to enter your dog in its first competition. And that's going to involve all sorts of failure. And you know, you have some training that you have to do to prepare for that competition. And you you do some training, you do show up to your training time, but you're not real organized about it. And you never sit down to think about all the obstacles that you needed to train. So you did put in some time training your dog and maybe handling some sequences, but you didn't give it your all. You didn't engage in purposeful practice. You didn't actually do the work to prepare or not showing up can also mean not following your training plans not following your handling plans, not following your fitness plan. So you made a plan to train five times



a week. And then you only train three times a week, or you made a plan to train five times a week. And you did go out to your training space five times a week. But you sat in a chair for part of that time and surf the internet looking for training advice, instead of actually trying to train your dog and engaging in the failure that's associated with that, and also the success that's also not showing up. So you can't count failures that are a result of simply not showing up as one of those five epic failures. Because not showing up well, it is failing is a form of sabotage. And failure because of not showing up violates your internal integrity. And I've talked a lot about being internally, behaving with internal integrity towards yourself, honoring yourself, respecting yourself, telling the truth to yourself, nobody is going to know but you if you lie to yourself, but that does violate your sense of internal integrity makes it hard for you to trust yourself, it makes it hard for you to be confident with yourself. So not showing up is failing, it's a form of sabotage, you don't get to count it as one of those epic failures, not showing up might feel comfortable. Because you never took a risk. And, in fact, you did meet expectations, because really, you expected to fail, you set yourself up to fail because you didn't show up. And then when you fell when you failed, you validated all that was the result, which served as evidence for all those thoughts and feelings that you had about failing in the first place. So if you set that five times a month failure goal, you do not get to count not showing up failures, the only failures that you get to count that count towards that five failure a month goal are failures where you actually stuck your neck out and tried something outside your comfort zone and failed. Those failures really need to happen in something called the sweet spot, the spot where, like I said before your reach for something exceeds your grasp. So you really don't know how to do something, you don't have a firm grasp of the mechanics of something, or the concept of something. But your reach is you could reach just a little bit beyond into the unknown, of the skills that you have a firm grasp of and, and go for it, that's the sweet spot is a little uncomfortable. It's not impossible, you're not going to end up in the hospital, probably, but it's uncomfortable. That's the kind of failure that needs to happen where you reach into that sweet spot.



That's slightly uncomfortable, because then you can expand your grasp. And there's a book that I want to reference. I'll put a link to it in the show notes at podcast, the agility podcast dot the agility challenge.com, forward slash six. If you're an agility challenge member, it will just be in the notes below the video or the audio. But it's a book called The Talent Code. And it's written by an author named Daniel Coyle. It's a fantastic book, he talks a lot about our perceptions about talent and perfection. And the kind of failure that people who are really successful and talented engage in in order to get better, purposeful practice that involves failure that's designed to get us into that sweet spot. So that we can expand our grasp of of a concept or a topic or a skill. So you're showing up and you're trying in that sweet spot, and you're failing. Those failures are the ones that count toward your five failures a month challenge. So take the challenge, it's going to take you a month. And then once you've taken the challenge I want to hear back from you, you can leave a comment either at podcast dot the agility challenge.com forward slash six. Or if you're an agility challenge member, then you can log in at the agility challenge.com. And leave a comment for episode six. Now a couple of episodes ago, I talked about confusion and indecision. That was an episode four. So podcast at the agility challenge.com forward slash four. And I talked about how one of the ways that we avoid failure is by being in confusion and in a state of indecision. Being in a state of confusion, and indecision allows us to say I don't know and stay in our comfort zone and avoid failure. We don't know if we can meet expectations. And we don't know how we're going to deal with ourselves if we don't meet expectations and fail. And so we stay in that state of confusion or indecision where we avoid making decisions. We avoid getting the information session that would allow us to make a decision. And we stay in that state of confusion or indecision, so that we have an excuse to not take action. Because again, we don't want to risk failure. And more importantly, we don't want to risk experiencing the negative feelings of failure that go



along with that. So, if you are in a state of confusion, if you find yourself in a state of confusion or indecision, I want you to really be on the lookout for this and really, to call bullshit on yourself for this, watch yourself with this one. It's a very tricky one. Sometimes we are legitimately confused. And sometimes we legitimately don't have the information we need to make a decision. But if we're indulging in confusion, or indecision, call BS on yourself, it can feel very right to be confused, and it can feel comfortable to be confused. But I want you to really be truthful with yourself about this. And ask yourself, if really could you get out of confusion and take some action by acquiring some knowledge or asking for clarification, make a decision, knowing full well that that decision might involve it's almost certainly going to involve failure, also success. But with a plan and a strategy for how you're going to attack and head towards and look for chances to fail productively. Because remember, if you are working to avoid failure, then you're also going to avoid the opportunity for success. And if you anesthetize yourself against those negative feelings of failure, you're anesthetizing yourself against everything. You can't selectively anesthetize yourself to certain emotions and feelings without anesthetizing yourself to all of them. And then the highs aren't as high. And the lows aren't at the lows aren't as low, but the highs aren't as high as well. So you don't experience the lows of negative feelings. But you also are just kind of when you do finally succeed at something, the good news is you absolutely can reframe how you think and feel about failure and tackle it head on, you're gonna find yourself with those negative emotions, because that's just the way it is just because you're armed with all this information. It's not going to magic those motions away. But you can call bullshit on yourself. And you can do that with honor and respect and with a sense of internal integrity. And you can have a conversation with yourself about why failure is important and necessary. Just because you fail does not mean you are a failure, you just didn't meet expectations. You can analyze why, and change something and take action, knowing full well, more failure is in your future. And that's how you fail forward. You can be confident about your ability to reach and fail and try and succeed and tweak and reach and fail



and try and succeed and tweak. And then you're really onto something, you're just like that toddler or that puppy learning to walk, you learn a little bit more about how to walk and how to fall, every time you stumble and get back up. You're going to learn a little bit about how to fail, and how to get back up. And also you're going to succeed. That's part of it. And then you get to celebrate every part of that process, including the failures that got you there. And if you are in confusion about something, then you can reframe it from I don't know, to I don't know yet. Or I'm figuring out how to do this thing. And then take action. If it is I don't know yet, then get the information and figure it out. Make a decision, acknowledge that there's no right decision, there's just a decision. It's just a decision and then go for it and take note, you're going to fail, you're going to succeed, even if you succeed. Even if you make a decision and immediately succeed. That doesn't mean that you're going to succeed forevermore, you could make a decision on a handling strategy and immediately succeed. So for example, I've been playing around with my timing on blind crosses. I tried something the other day, it immediately worked. I immediately got success. And I thought well, that's cool. That really worked. And then I tried it again and failed. Now did I walk away from that tweak that I had made? Nope. I just kept tweaking. I looked at what made the first attempt successful. I looked at what made the subsequent attempt not successful, and then I tweaked and tried again. That's how it works. You make a decision, you go for it, you evaluate. So I hope that this two part mini series on failing failure failing forward can help you reframe the way that you think and feel about failure. Because it's our feelings and thoughts about failure really, and our feelings really that determine our actions when it comes to trying new things and growing and stretching as handlers, trainers and competitors. If you took the time to think about your latest epic failure, one where you reach exceeded your grasp, I'd really love to hear about it either in the comments for Episode Five, or this episode, Episode Six, and celebrate it with you. If you tried something recently, that you were pretty sure you were going to fail at. I'd really love to hear what it was you tried, how you didn't meet your own expectations, and what you thought and felt about it afterward. I'd love to hear



how you treated yourself on the other side of failure. Thank you so much for listening to this two part mini series on failing, failure and failing forward. I look forward to continuing this discussion in the comments section for this episode at [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.dot.the.agility.challenge.com) forward slash six. And remember, you've got a month starting now to work toward accumulating five epic failures where you really had to step outside of your comfort zone into that sweet spot and try something new. Thank you so much for listening to the agility challenge podcast. If you're enjoying this podcast, I'd really love it if you would take the time to leave a review on iTunes so other people can find their way to this podcast and benefit from the discussions we've been having. If you have any questions, you can head over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.dot.the.agility.challenge.com). And leave a message including now a voice message if you'd like me to feature your comments and questions in a future episode. If you enjoyed today's podcast, and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things we talked about today, head to the web page for today's episode, [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.dot.the.agility.challenge.com) forward slash six and scroll to the bottom, you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. I'm a pretty tech savvy person but even for me it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead and head on over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.dot.the.agility.challenge.com) forward slash six subscribe to the podcast, leave a review and share it with a friend. Also, you can leave a comment below the episode and let me know your thoughts about what we discussed today. I'd love to hear from you, and maybe discuss your thoughts on a future episode.