

Fail Forward: Sharing failures to maximize learning

Ashley Good, Fail Forward

ashley@failforward.org

[@FailForward](https://twitter.com/FailForward)

FailForward.org



[#npdriven16](https://twitter.com/npdriven16)

[@o_n_n](https://twitter.com/o_n_n)

Be Bold. Drive Change. Together.

2014 FAILURE REPORT

**MONITORING, EVALUATING,
AND ADAPTING TO FAILURE**





Success



what people think
it looks like

Success



what it really
looks like

Failure Happens. We help your organization learn, innovate and build resilience.

Create a Failure Report
at your organization

[Download the How-to Guide »](#)

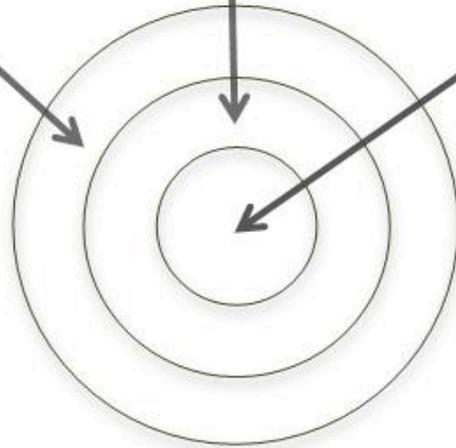


Three Levels of Intelligent Failure

**Start the
Conversation**

**Build the Essential
Skill of Failure**

**Develop Tools for
*Intelligent Failure***



Intelligent Failure: What does it mean to you?



Criteria of a Failure

Not all failures are created equally.

CAUSES &

what you did, and didn't do

*Blameworthy**

Moral Lapse

Incompetence / Ignorance

Uncertainty

Task Challenge

Experimentation

*Praiseworthy**

CONSEQUENCES

losses and gains over time

To Self

tangible and intangible

To Others

tangible and intangible

Recovery Time

short to impossible

fail·ure

/'fālyər/

noun

1. ~~Lack of Success~~
2. Teachable Moment



What can a listener do to make you feel safe sharing your failure story and help you learn?



Great Listeners

- Listen
- Don't judge
- Don't try to solve it
- Be supportive & "on my team"
- Recognize the courage it takes to tell a failure story
- Ask "so what?" and "now what?" questions



The development community is failing...to learn from failure. Instead of recognizing these experiences as learning opportunities, we hide them away out of fear and embarrassment.



Understand
Why Failure
Matters



Read
Great Failure
Stories



Share
Your
Story

No more. This site is an open space for development professionals who recognize that the only “bad” failure is one that’s repeated, for those who are willing to share their missteps to ensure they don’t happen again. It is a community and a resource, created to establish new levels of transparency, collaboration and innovation within the development sector. [Read more.](#)

Fix My Story

“I got funding from EWB to start a website so that failures and learnings could be shared. No one used the site. EWB didn't see the potential and cut funding to the project so it failed. “

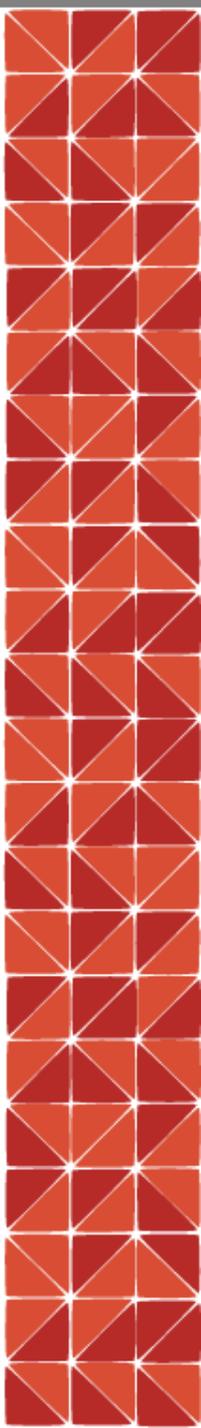
It's hard to learn anything from this story.

Why is that?



Great Tellers

- Tell a story
- Pick one that has meaning to you
- Don't blame
- Look for root causes
- Focus on the learning
- Include perspectives from other stakeholders





60 Seconds



failure is my muse ...

Example Learning Questions

- Why does this failure matter? Why is it important to share?
- What were the consequences of this failure?
- What would/will you do differently?
- Who else might benefit from this learning?
- How has your understanding of the situation changed since it happened?
- Is this failure a part of any trends you notice?
- What does this failure cause you to question?
- How would other characters in this story talk about this failure?

Any other question(s) you are curious about...



30 Seconds



failure is my muse ...

Switch Tellers and Listeners

60 Seconds



failure is my muse ...

Example Learning Questions

- Why does this failure matter? Why is it important to share?
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- What would/will you do differently?
- Who else might benefit from this learning?
- How has your understanding of the situation changed since it happened?
- Is this failure a part of any trends you notice?
- What does this failure cause you to question?
- How would other characters in this story talk about this failure?

Any other question(s) you are curious about...



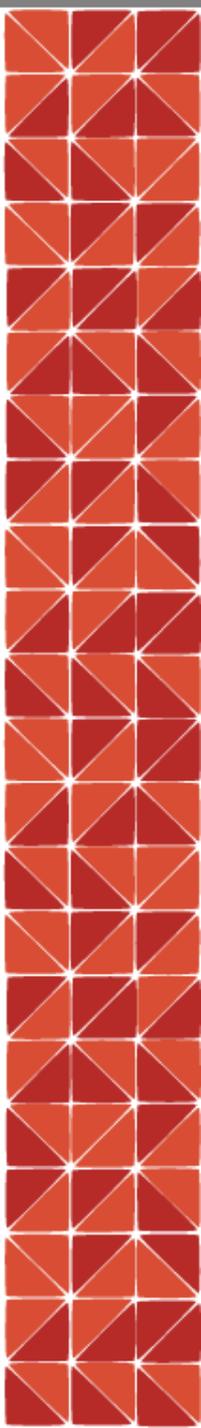
30 Seconds



failure is my muse ...

Quick Recap

- What was that like?
- What surprised you?
- What will you take away from the activity?

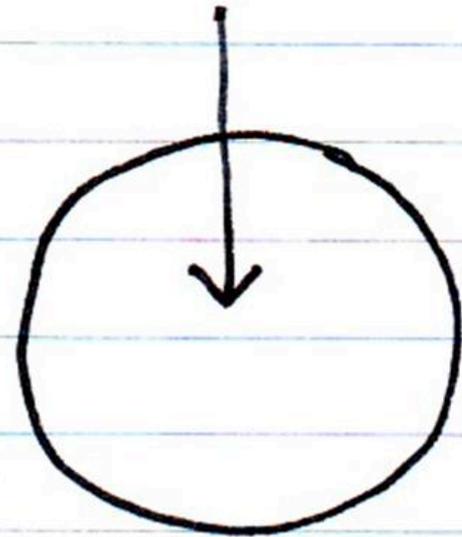




At your tables discuss:
What is one thing you can do?



Your comfort
zone



At your tables discuss: What is one thing you can do?

Will you write your own **Failure Report**?

Will you petition to include **learning in your core values**?

Will you implement a way of getting **rapid feedback**?

Will you commit to doing **after action reviews**?

Will you do something **to break down a barrier to learning** you have identified?

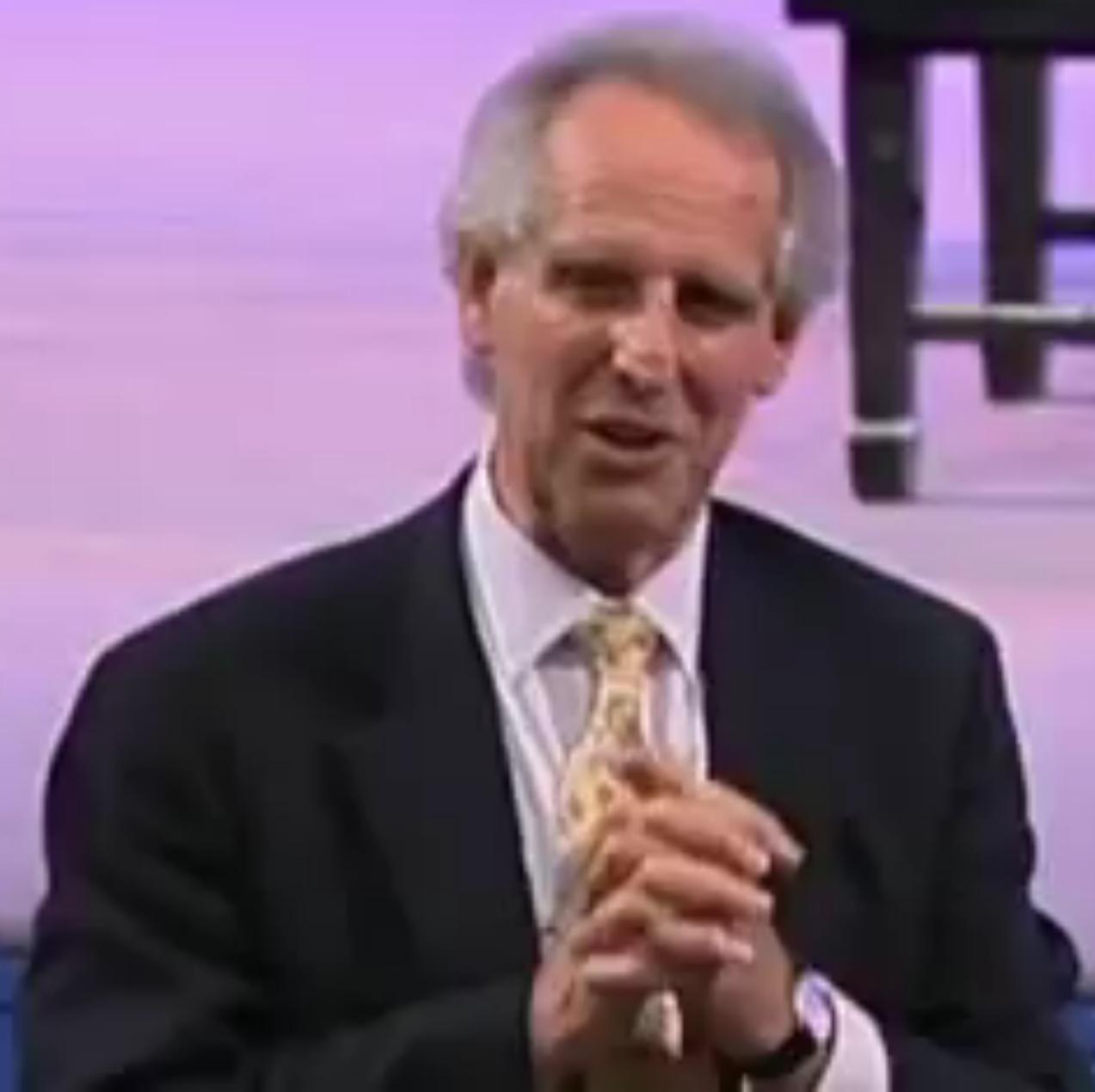
Will you include learning from failure on your **performance assessments**?

Will you revisit **past lessons learned reports** and ensure the learning was applied?

What will you stop doing to allow time for learning and reflection?

What else might you do to embed Intelligent Failure at your organization?







Thank you!

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The Nonprofit Driven Hub!
Connection. Conversation. Relaxation.

