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Topic: Celebrate Failure

J. K. Rowling once said, “It is impossible to live without failing at something unless we live so cautiously that we might as well not have lived at all - in which case, we fail by default.” I am on a mission to spread the idea of Celebrating Failure and hence enable people and communities to do what they love, no matter what but today’s talk is not about me, it’s about you, my dear friends!

Albert Einstein - Nobel Prize winner for Physics, whose name is a synonym for genius and prodigy was once told by his teachers that he would never succeed. He graduated near the bottom of his class and was the only one to not have a job offer; He went on to discover the Theory of Relativity which is considered to be one of the two pillars of modern physics and rest my friends, is history!

In today’s fast-paced world, failure is considered something very derogatory. Students in schools and colleges are punished for failing in exams, corporates are fired from their companies for not meeting their targets, divorced women are still not allowed to enter places of worship, lovers commit suicide after a broken relationship, people give up on their dreams after being bankrupt, are just a few examples or perceptions of failures.

People who fail at something are generally seen with disrespectful eyes and are treated with outrageous behavior. Failure in our times has been so negatively overemphasized that people nowadays are even scared to fail - so much so that people do not even try to achieve or reach their goals that they wanted to, in the initial place, which is even

worse and that, my friends, is what I term as the actual failure. One of the most important things I have learned from my Dad is that one should do his best and get ready for the worst.

Let us acknowledge the fact that all of us have failed at things we loved doing that we aren't proud of:

1. During the first semester of my undergraduate studies at the prestigious Delhi Technological University in India, I failed in not one but three exams out of a total of ten subjects and the professors were extremely particular about producing answers as they are in the textbook. And after trying my level best, I just couldn't do it and I almost gave up; So, one final exam of a subject in which I had the highest marks in the midterms, I try to cheat, get caught; Two months later, I am asked to appear in front of the Board of Discipline. During this time, I was completely shattered, drowned in thoughts of self-doubts and uncontrollable spells of crying, not knowing what I'll do in my life. I was left abandoned in a never-ending array of negative thoughts and I could hardly express myself to anyone. By far, this has been the lowest point in the twenty-two years of my existence; I was torn apart and embarrassed of myself. Luckily, seeing my record and on the recommendation of my professors, the board lets me go. Following this traumatizing failure of mine, I heed important life lessons and plan to move forward. Lesson to accept failures in life and to take them in my pride, not to give up and keep moving forward. The only thing I knew was that there was more to learn and experience. I simply did not give up. As a result, I completed my degree with better marks than anyone around me could have imagined; And here I am today, studying at New York University.
2. During my first full-time internship, I was told that I had extremely low productivity and that I didn't produce the expected results. Today, I have around two dozen projects under my belt.

3. The manuscript of my debut book titled Celebrating Failure was turned down by numerous publishers saying that it was the worst idea ever; and still, somebody thought that it would be worth having me at today's TEDx event!! Failure comes with its emotional baggage which is not easy to let go of. Every day, every rejection gave me a reason to quit. But today standing here, it feels like it was the best rejection of my life so far.

What is that one thing that stops us from performing to the best of our potential? The fear of failing; And what if we failed, then the world will judge us - our family, friends, teachers, boss, et cetera. But my dear friends, success is something passive whereas failure is something that invokes an action. Someone rightly said that timing, perseverance, and ten years of trying would eventually make you look like an overnight success. You might have the courage, you might have the conviction but it is the perseverance that shall prevail.

Today, I am going to give you the ultimate hack of all times - CELEBRATE FAILURE - that's just it! As it turns out, nothing fails like a success and nothing succeeds like a failure. All we need to do is to take that first leap of faith to step out of our comfort zones and if we fail, which will we will, then we need to transform the emotional energy arising out of failure to fuel our end goal, whatever it might be. Come on guys, it took Leonardo DiCaprio twenty-three damn years after his first nomination to get his own gold man!!

Choose to do what you love - something that motivates you to get out of bed each morning, whether it's a weekday or a weekend. Work on something that doesn't feel like work and this is what will give you enough courage to get back on your feet each time after life knocks you down. Know why you are doing something that you are doing. Keep your core values intact and be true to your cause and failure will look like a child's play. Because my friends, failure is something inevitable; if we want to achieve

something in life then we have to exponentially increase our failure rate. And who knows the next Einstein may be sitting amongst us! Maybe, just maybe, the greatest successes come from having the freedom to fail.

For those who have an open mind for new ideas, who seek to create long-lasting success, I offer you a challenge - from now on, start celebrating failure. May failure be with you!