



Episode 102: Why FAIL Is Not A 4-Letter Word

with Drs Claire Edwin, Sally Ross, and Taj Hassan

It is so easy for us to feel bad when something goes wrong. We blame ourselves for things that we don't have control over. We end up succumbing to feelings of shame and guilt, doubting our worth and skills. Consequently, we may create an emotional barrier that hinders us from opening up and sharing our genuine feelings with our colleagues.

In this episode, Rachel, Claire, Sally, and Taj, provide advice on how to deal with failure. All of them recognise the importance of learning from the errors we all make. To further normalise the idea of failure, they shed light on workplace communication and vulnerability.

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Quote to remember:

'Delegation is one of the arts of leadership and allowing others around you to actually run with things. And you've got to be willing to let people have their head and know that if they do, if they do muck up, that you'll still support them, and you'll still be accountable for them, and you're less likely to fail. And if you do fail, and you're sharing it with others, you're not failing all on your own.'

What You Will Learn

When we fail, we often blame ourselves. However, failure and mistakes are part of the learning process. It is our choice to either dwell on them or rise above.

The first action we should take when dealing with failures is to think. Instead of panicking and putting the blame on others, we have to be rational and objective..

Understandably, not everyone is equipped enough to be logical as soon as failure arises. Personal feelings might get in the way of our sensible mind, making it challenging to figure out ideal solutions. Likewise, it can even be harder to talk about mistakes and disappointment as a team.

Many of us tend to punish ourselves over our mistakes without even realising it. The activity helps you seek healthier ways to embrace failure.

Lastly, the exercise aims to help you open up to people around you. It's completely normal to rely on each other as a team. It will take time before you're more comfortable in showing your vulnerability. However, once you're honest with your mistakes, it will improve your communication and understanding of one another.



Activity: Reflect and Reassess

Rachel started the episode by talking about micro failures. Micro failures are small things that we do and dwell on.

List 5 micro failures that bother you daily. Think of ways to manage them better..

My micro failures include...	To manage them better, I will...
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Do you spend too much time thinking about your micro failures?

How do you think this affects your everyday life?

What actions can you take to help stop dwelling so much on your micro failiures?



Sally mentioned that FAIL is just an acronym for First Attempt In Learning. You do not need to always know the right answer and the right thing to do. These things are what make us human. All we have to learn is how to deal with it properly.

What is your take on the acronym FAIL? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?

Taking full accountability plays a major role when you are a leader. However, it can create the misunderstanding that as a leader, you have to deal with things alone. Discussing and reflecting on failures as a team fosters support, communication, and solidarity. When your colleagues are comfortable with one another, solving issues in the future will be easier.

Has there been a time in your leadership that you thought you made a wrong decision? How did you deal with it?

What do you think that experience taught you? Did you share it with your team?



One quality of being a good leader is openly admitting when you fail.

Reflect on a particular time you failed. What did it teach you? Do you think it helped you become a better leader today?

Do you find it easy to acknowledge your mistakes as a leader? How do you deal with them?

Has there ever been a time where a senior colleague had to call you out on a decision you made? What did you feel? How did you deal with the criticism on something you were confident about?

As a leader, how do you steer your team members away from feeling guilty of their failures? How do you think this practice helps them?



The lack of prioritisation, perfectionism, and people-pleasing traits are the trio that condemns us to fail.

Which of the 3 P's do you suffer from the most?

To deal with failures healthier, Rachel suggests that we should first try to eliminate the tendency to please people. We have to accept the fact that not everyone is on our good side. Nonetheless, this does not mean that we failed. Remember: we go to work to do our jobs, not win a popularity contest. It is essential to give ourselves and others time to share and reflect on our errors. This way, we'll understand how to handle them better.

CPD time claimed:

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