



mattmcwilliams.com

I am

"I am a failure."

With those words, I [launched this blog](#) more than seven months ago.

But I was wrong. I meant well, but my words were poorly chosen.

If you have ever listened to [Zig Ziglar](#), you have probably heard him say that "failure is an event, not a person." I certainly had.

So why did I write those words? What did I declare that "I am a failure?" Probably for effect more than anything. But that doesn't make them right.

Can you imagine anyone saying:

"I am cancer."

"I am the flu."

"I am a bad haircut."

"I am a fan of the Backstreet Boys."

Of course not. These are all events, not persons. They are phases of life that we pass through. *They do not identify us.*

I have failed many times and I am grateful for each *event* of failure. While I have learned a lot from books and from the failures of others, I have learned the *most* from my own mistakes and misfortunes.

The fact is that on the road to success, you *will* fail many times. Sometimes it will be entirely your fault. Sometimes there is nothing you can do to prevent it. Navigating the road successfully, though, requires that you know how to react to failures.

How should you respond to failure?

I found the answer in a biography of Winston Churchill:

Success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm.

The proper reaction to failure is to keep going. Yes, take the time to learn from it. But do not dwell on it. And certainly, do not allow it to dampen your spirits.

Maintain the *same* enthusiasm for reaching your goal that you had before the failure. If you are particularly daring, ***ramp it up***. Be ***even more excited*** because you just learned something. That failure is behind you now and that is cause for rejoicing!

Said another way:

Success is not in reaching the mountaintop. It's in climbing out of every valley along the way.

How have you used failure as a catalyst to success?