



The Fear of Failure

Remember when you were a kid and just knew there was a monster lurking at the foot of your bed? I remember our Son seeing pink alligators down the hall from his room. My granddaughter recently refused to sleep in a new room decorated and prepared by her parents because there were monsters in that room. How did they get over their fear? Well, Josh outgrew the pink alligators and as a father himself, he has allowed his daughter (my granddaughter) to have her old room back. I can't tell you the number of times my wife and I had to turn on the lights to assure him that there were no pink alligators at the end of the hall. As an adult and wearing the hat of counselor, I have also been privileged to help other adults address fears that paralyze them. I recently talked with a church member who "feared" that their congregation was doomed. No, it was not C3PO, but the approach to future possibilities was similar. Do you know what I have learned? Once the lights came on, the monster was no longer frightening. In fact, it wasn't even there.

The same principle applies to overcoming our fear of failure. When we look at our fear in the light of day, we discover that what we are afraid of isn't so frightening after all.

The following acrostic gives us a convenient tool for remembering the steps to take in order to shed light on that which we fear most.

- **F**IND A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.
 - We often admit defeat simply because we failed to achieve the results we had anticipated. Those results may not be failures at all. Take another look at your failures. You may find that, from a different perspective, they open the door to a whole new world for you, your Sunday School Class, or your Church.

- **E**NGAGE YOUR PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS.
 - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, reportedly told of a time when he climbed into a taxicab in Paris. Before he could utter a word, the driver turned to him and asked, "Where can I take you, Mr. Doyle?"

Doyle was flabbergasted. He asked the driver if he had ever seen him before.

"No, sir," the driver responded, "But this morning's paper had a story about you being on vacation in Marseilles. This is the taxi stand where people who return from Marseilles always come. Your skin color tells me you have been on vacation. The ink-spot on your right index finger suggests to me that you are a writer. Your clothing is very English, not French. Adding up all those pieces of information, I deduced that you are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

"This is amazing!" the writer exclaimed. "You are a real-life counter-part to my fictional creation, Sherlock Holmes."



"There was one other clue," the driver said.

"What was that?"

"Your name is on the front of your suitcase."

If only all clues were that obvious! I've found that those who cannot overcome their fear of failure are often those who walk away from a failed challenge without making any effort to determine why they failed and how they can avoid the mistake next time around.

- **A**SK FOR HELP.
 - Somewhere in your network of friends or family is someone who has information you need to solve a given problem. Someone in your life can offer you encouragement when you struggle. Someone has been where you are now and can suggest ways to get to where you want to go. What's keeping you from calling them right now?

- **R**ESIST THE TEMPTATION TO GIVE UP.
 - Persistence is really the only difference between those who finally reach their goal and those who just talk about it. Who can forget the image of Rocky Balboa, the boxer who overcame a more skilled opponent simply because he refused to stay on the canvas after being knocked down? I have had to watch those Rocky movies with my daughter in law over and over. She doesn't give up on Rocky either.

FEAR - Face your fear of failure, my friend. Bathe your fear in the light of God's presence. You'll discover it is no more frightening than that imaginary pink alligator of your childhood.