



## Art of Selling...

By Art Waskey

### FAILING FORWARD — THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

Several months ago when a customer called to tell us they were moving their business to a competitor, they agreed to a meeting to discuss past issues with our company. One manager berated our sales rep for not returning his calls, lack of product knowledge, etc; he simply didn't like our rep. After the meeting, our rep was very upset; her self-worth had been shaken to the core.

Can you identify with this rep? How many times have you had an experience where you failed to meet expectations?

In his book *Failing Forward*, John Maxwell gives 15 steps for Failing Forward. In his second step, **Learn a New Definition of Failure**, he explains, "Changing your perspective on failure will help you persevere, and ultimately achieve your desires. How should you judge failure? Consider ...

1. **Failure Is NOT Avoidable:** If you are a human being, you're going to make mistakes. You've learned a lesson when your actions change.
2. **Failure Is NOT an Event:** Just as success is not an event, neither is failure. It is how you deal with life along the way.
3. **Failure Is NOT Objective:** You are the only person who can realistically label what you do a failure or a success. Labels are subjective.
4. **Failure Is NOT the Enemy:** Many people are afraid of failure and try to avoid failure like the plague. Adversity creates success. People who envision failure as the enemy are captive to the conquerors.
5. **Failure Is NOT Irreversible:** Mistakes are not irreversible. Keep everything in perspective. People who understand failure take it in stride.
6. **Failure Is NOT a Stigma:** When mistakes are made, don't let them get you down. Don't view mistakes as a stigma. Envision each failure as another step to success.
7. **Failure Is NOT Final:** Even what may appear to be a huge failure should not prevent you from further achievements. Judge all things by the final results."

When we offered to reassign the account to another rep, we were able to keep it. Though she initially felt like a failure, the first rep learned a valuable lesson: regardless of how much she desired acceptance, not all people would like her. Sometimes we need to analyze our customers to see if another rep would be a better personality fit. Her initial failure has made her a more effective listener with her current customers; she consistently leads the sales force in adding new and growing existing business.

Maxwell concludes his second step to **Failing Forward** by reminding us, "Mistakes don't define failure. They are merely the price of achievement on the success journey." As the saying goes, "God uses people who fail, 'cause there aren't any other kinds around."

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